

NEW

EVERYTHING
YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

THE PEOPLE AND EVENTS THAT DEFINED THIS DEVASTATING CONFLICT

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WHO SHAPED
A GLOBAL
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changed warfare forever

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Learn how the war is remembered and
commemorated today



Welcome



On 28 June 1914 the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria set into motion events that would inevitably lead to a war that, in turn, engulfed the continent of Europe and eventually drew in the major powers of the globe. In total 30 nations ended up declaring war over the course of four years.

Then known as the Great War, it was the first industrialised conflict the world had witnessed with volunteers and conscripts being sent to the trenches of the front lines, while those at home toiled in fields and factories to try to keep them supplied. The human tragedy and massive cost at the heart of the First World War was like nothing anyone had ever seen before.

However, it was also a catalyst for innovation and social change. As you'll learn in the following pages, many great inventions and new ways of thinking were discovered in the crucible of this war and many people found new purpose and renewed identity thanks to their participation.

「 FUTURE 」



THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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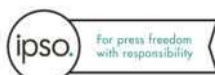


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HISTORY**
bookazine series





Contents

- 8** WHAT CAUSED THE GREAT WAR?
- 16** ASSASSINATION OF ARCHDUKE FERDINAND
- 20** WWI FIRSTS
- 28** WHAT WAS IT LIKE IN LONDON, 1915?
- 30** ZEPPELIN WARS
- 36** TRENCH WARFARE
- 38** INSIDE A WWI FIELD HOSPITAL
- 40** INDIAN ARMY AT WAR
- 44** THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES
- 48** BATTLE OF VERDUN
- 58** BATTLE OF JUTLAND
- 64** SOMME: A LOST GENERATION
- 72** FORGOTTEN FRONTS OF WWI
- 76** THE LAST BATTLE
- 82** LEGENDARY LEADERS OF WORLD WAR I
- 90** THE RED BARON
- 98** WOMEN IN WORLD WAR I
- 104** ARMISTICE: THE AFTERMATH



90



30



20



58



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Chris Collingwood - Collingwood/Hulton-Contrib (50), Rex Features/Shutterstock (58)

28 June 1914

WHAT CAUSED

20 defining moments

When Gavrilo Princip opened fire on Archduke Franz Ferdinand, he killed not just the heir to the Austrian throne, but sentenced to death over 9 million people in four years. But if assassination was the excuse, it wasn't the cause...



What caused the Great War?

THE GREAT WAR?

that led to WORLD WAR I



1 February 1864

PRINCE EDWARD NURSES A GRUDGE

British foreign policy is redefined after the Prussian invasion of Denmark

Prussia and Austria's devastating seizure of the ethnically mixed territories of Schleswig and Holstein, which separated Denmark from what is now Germany, shocked the young British Prince Edward - the future King Edward VII - who was only months into his marriage to Alexandra of Denmark. The pair openly supported the Danes in the conflict in spite of an increasingly pro-German Queen Victoria.

This conflict, the Second Schleswig War - coupled with his cold relationship with his mother - formed the bedrock of Edward VII's foreign policy, and he cultivated a staunchly pro-French and anti-German clique that would survive in government long after his death in 1910. Under Edward VII's influence, the Royal Navy was reformed and modernised to counter the growing German navy, and Britain's aloof isolation slipped away in favour of treaties with France and Russia that would one day become the Triple Entente, dragging the United Kingdom and its empire into war.



Prince Edward VII and Queen Alexandra in 1896



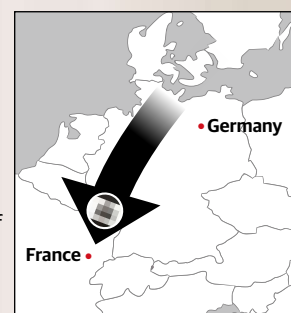
French soldiers in the Franco-Prussian War

19 July 1870

Germany unites at France's expense

Believing "a Franco-Prussian War must take place before a united Germany was formed", Otto von Bismarck goaded France into attacking. The French defeat brought down the Second French Empire of Napoleon III - the monarch was captured along with the remainder of his army - and a vast Prussian occupation of huge swathes of France until war reparations were paid.

This humiliation, along with the annexation of the valuable and heavily industrialised Alsace-Lorraine border region became a huge national tragedy. It remained at the heart of French culture in the run-up to World War I, as foreign affairs revolved around preparing for a new conflict with Germany, and public opinion called for the return of the lost provinces. In the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War, the North German Confederation was dissolved and replaced by a unified German Empire, led by Kaiser Wilhelm I and Chancellor Von Bismarck, while the French Third Republic formed in Paris.



8 February 1867

THE OLD EMPIRE CRASHES DOWN

The Dual Monarchy replaces the Austrian Empire

A dispute between the traditional guiding hand of the Germanic states - Austria, whose Habsburg family had ruled since 1278 - and the increasingly powerful Kingdom of Prussia - under Prime Minister Otto von Bismarck and King Wilhelm I - allowed the growing rivalry between the two powers to bubble to the surface in open war.

Left weakened and with Hungary set to break away, the Austrian Empire was dissolved in favour of a cumbersome Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, in which each state was governed independently and then together by a convoluted system of joint-ministers. This

solution to Austria's internal instability in turn created a whole new set of stress points in the vast edifice, including Hungary's oppressive policies towards its non-Hungarian subjects, made them easy prey to Serb and Russian-sponsored agitation that would prove so toxic in Austrian-run Bosnia in 1914.

With Austria's traditional dependencies, the myriad small German principalities, now under the banner of one Prussian-dominated North German Confederation, Austria-Hungary had to look toward the Balkans and the waning Ottoman influence for opportunities to expand.

Prussian and Austrian cavalry face off at the Battle of Königgrätz, resulting in a decisive Prussian victory



20 March 1890

BISMARCK IS FORCED INTO RETIREMENT

German foreign policy turns belligerent as the Kaiser takes over

Though Otto von Bismarck's role in the birth of the German Empire and a renewed enmity with France left him with a reputation for belligerence, the 'Iron Chancellor' was a stabilising force for central Europe. He kept Germany back from the rush for colonies that would bring it into direct competition with other powers, declaring in 1876 that a war in the Balkans wouldn't be worth "the healthy bones of a single Pomeranian musketeer". He also signed the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia in 1887 that limited their involvement in conflicts with each other.

Wilhelm II succeeded his father, Kaiser Frederick III, with a very different set of priorities and the two clashed constantly, the toxic atmosphere in the court eventually forcing Bismarck to resign in 1890. His replacement - Leo von Caprivi - was far more in step with Wilhelm's vision, fatally letting the Reinsurance Treaty lapse - pushing Russia towards France - in favour of a friendship with Britain that would never come to fruition, leaving Germany isolated in Europe by 1914.



German chancellor Otto von Bismarck in the year he left office

10 July 1898

Britain and France size each other up

The scramble for Africa reached crisis point as France and Britain coveted control of the Nile to link up their African colonies. France especially felt threatened by Britain's occupation of Egypt in 1882 and quickly dispatched a small force to Fashoda (now Kodok in south Sudan) where the lines of both powers' empires intersected.

After a daring 14-month trek across Africa, the French force seized Fashoda on 10 July 1898, however reinforcements turned back, and a flotilla of British gunboats led by imperialism's posterboy, Horatio Herbert Kitchener, arrived at the isolated fort - both sides politely insisting on their right to be there, and rather nobly agreeing to fly British, French and Egyptian flags over the fort in



French Captain Marchand at Fashoda in 1898

compromise. At home, meanwhile, talk of war gripped both parliaments - only when it looked as though victory would hinge on sea-power, putting the lighter, faster French fleet at the mercy of the heavier British one, did the French withdraw and an official boundary was finally agreed between the two powers.

The normalisation of British and French relations after the Fashoda Incident, and the clear demarcation of influence, relieved the constant pressure between the two to an extent, setting them off from hundreds of years of semi-regular bloodshed on a new course towards alliance.

29 December 1895

Germany is warned off in southern Africa

Though the competing British and German interests around what is now South Africa had been a clear flashpoint for decades, the British Cape Colony's failed raid on the independent Transvaal Republic that would eventually lead to the Boer War - though unsanctioned by Britain - received the motherland's firm backing.

Kaiser Wilhelm II drafted a letter of congratulation to Boer president Paul Kruger that was celebrated by the German press and sparked outrage in its British counterparts. Germany's urbane ambassador to London was shocked when the Foreign Office's bullish



Transvaal president Paul Kruger in 1898

Sir Francis Bertie informed him that wiping out the German navy would be "child's play for the English fleet".

Very much aware of their limitations, their political isolation and of Britain's overreaction, Wilhelm II resolved to increase the power of the German Imperial Navy and to treat Britain no longer just as a potential ally but also as a potential threat.

4 January 1894

FRANCE AND RUSSIA JOIN FORCES

France and Russia form a military alliance

A less likely love affair it would be difficult to imagine: democratic republican France and archaic autocratic imperial Russia cosy up despite public outcry in both countries against the alliance.

France felt encircled by Britain and Germany who were enjoying a rare cosiness at this point, while likewise Russia saw itself threatened by the British Empire in

central Asia, and the Far East, and by Germany's allies Austria-Hungary in Europe.

Where past treaties were agreements between governments designed to keep them from interfering in each other's business, this was primarily a military pact with a guaranteed military response if the other was attacked.



The Avenue Nicholas II in Paris, named in honour of the Franco-Russian Alliance

With no room for ambiguity, the Franco-Russian Alliance was the first of many that would bind the powers of Europe together like mountain climbers, just waiting for one to fall and the rest to go tumbling after.



11 June 1903

THE BLACK HAND STRIKES

Austro-Serbian friendship dies with Serb king at hands of secret society

In a scandal that shocked all of Europe, Serbia's deeply unpopular and pro-Austrian king Alexander Obrenović and his wife were murdered by a cabal of army officers who forced their way into the palace and roused the royal couple from their hiding place.

Perpetrated by the Black Hand, a radical nationalist secret society dedicated to absorbing 'Serb' lands (whether Bosnian, Macedonians or Croats liked it or not) from the rule of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, the Black Hand were already so entrenched in Serbia's powerful military that the new government refused all foreign



A French illustration of the May Overthrow

diplomatic pressure to have them arrested for fear they'd be the next rulers to be brutally murdered. One of the key conspirators - Dragutin 'Apis' Dimitrijević - would later become the leader of the Black Hand and Serbia's head of military intelligence - a powerful combination that would allow him to organise a failed attempt on the life of Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Josef in 1911, and a more successful and infamous attack on Franz Ferdinand three years later.

31 March 1905

THE KAISER PAYS A VISIT TO TANGIER

Germany's attempt to drive a wedge between Britain and France fails

Keen to test the extent of France and Britain's Entente Cordiale - signed 8 April 1904 and putting an end to colonial rivalry in Africa and Asia - Wilhelm II arrives in Tangier to deliver a speech in favour of Moroccan independence - much to the chagrin of France, who planned to take over Morocco as a protectorate.

The Kaiser expected to use the ensuing conference to resolve the situation as an opportunity to magnanimously grant France limited control, bringing them closer to Germany and isolating Britain, but to his surprise British foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey, backed the French in the strongest possible terms, and it's Germany that, once again, came away isolated. The Tangier Crisis paved the way for the Agadir Crisis in 1911, which despite higher stakes - a German gunship off the coast, and French and Spanish troop deployments on Morocco's streets - the aims of the Germans were the same, and so were the results: Franco-British military dependency increased, as did the French hold on Morocco and Germany's political encirclement.



A French illustration shows Austrian emperor Franz Josef tearing Bosnia from Turkey



6 October 1908

Austria takes Bosnia

Austro-Hungarian troops had been in the Ottoman province of Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1878 running it in all but name. In a series of letters and a six-hour secret meeting, Russian foreign minister, Alexander Izvolsky, and Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, Alois Aehrenthal, agreed a revision to the treaty of 1878, allowing Austria-Hungary full control of Bosnia. When the Austrians announced their intent Izvolsky acted as outraged as the rest of Europe's political movers and shakers (but not nearly as outraged as Serbia) and only when Vienna threatened to release secret records proving Izvolsky's duplicity did Russia back down and force Serbia to accept the annexation.

This affair prompted a shift in the direction of Serbian nationalism and public outrage that had so far been more preoccupied with Macedonia and Kosovo. Italy, meanwhile - part of the Triple Alliance with Austria-Hungary and Germany - had been long promised territory on the Croatian coast if Austria were to take Bosnia. Affronted, the Italian government would cite this breach of trust when they joined WWI on the side of the Triple Entente in 1915.

5 September 1905

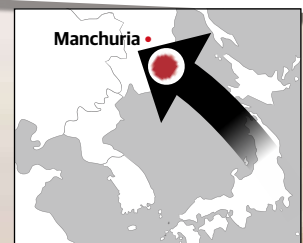
Japan checks Russian colonialism

Imperial Russia's colonial ambitions in Asia finally overreached themselves, and the Japanese launched a devastating night attack on 8 February 1904 against the fleet anchored at Port Arthur (now Lüshunkou).

This blow to Russia not only brought the Tsarist autocracy to the brink with the Revolution of 1905, but forced Russia to look to the west to expand its influence. The factions in the imperial court fixated on increasing Russia's influence over the Slavic and Orthodox Christian nationalities were strengthened, and foreign policy became increasingly fixated on Bulgaria and Serbia especially. The desire to gain control over the Turkish Straits which would allow the Russian fleet in the Black Sea access to the Mediterranean also grew.



Japanese cavalry crossing the Yalu River into Russian-held Manchuria



A 1905 Punch cartoon showing Wilhelm II as an unlikely friend of Morocco

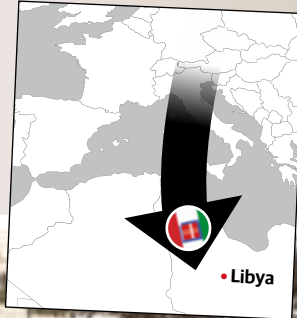
29 September 1911

ITALY STARTS A FEEDING FRENZY

Italy invades Libya and kicks off the First Balkan War

Though Britain and France had carved off Egypt and Morocco from the fringes of the Ottoman Empire, Italy's sudden invasion of Libya - one of the empire's central provinces - stunned the world. The superior technology of the Italians and their use of air reconnaissance saw them quickly take key cities before becoming bogged down in guerrilla warfare and counterattacks, while the brutal naval assault on the Dodecanese - the southernmost Greek islands - bloodied the Turks and forced them on the defensive.

While it kicked off a chain reaction (goaded on by the Russian ambassador to Belgrade) in the Balkans that led to the First Balkan War, the Italian seizure of Libya demonstrated a shift in Italy's foreign relations away from its traditional allies. Rather than consult its Triple Alliance partners Germany and Austria-Hungary - both invested in the integrity of the Ottoman Empire - they cleared the campaign with France and Britain beforehand instead.



Italian artillery near Tripoli, Libya, in 1911

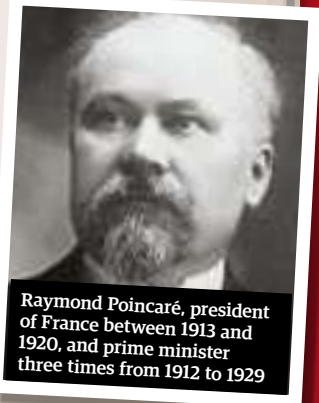
21 January 1912

France votes 'oui' for nationalism

Voted in on a wave of nationalism following the Agadir Crisis in July 1911, hardline anti-German prime minister Raymond Poincaré presided over a lurch to the right. Made president the following year he consolidated control of foreign policy and the Higher Council of War, and dispatched veteran statesman Théophile Delcassé - dubbed "the most dangerous man for Germany in France" by Wilhelm II - as ambassador to Russia to better co-ordinate Franco-Russian military strategy.

As Poincaré's government prepared for war he also made it more likely, telling Russian ambassador, Alexander Izvolsky, that any conflict with Austria-Hungary arising from the First Balkan War would have France's backing.

The hawks in the French government calculated that not only would a war over the Balkans be the surest guarantee that Russia would commit all of its forces to the field, but an Austro-Hungarian invasion of Serbia would bog down the Dual Monarchy, leaving the allies free to tackle Germany.



Raymond Poincaré, president of France between 1913 and 1920, and prime minister three times from 1912 to 1929

12 February 1912

ANGLO-GERMAN ARMS TALKS SINK

Negotiations for a cap on boat building are rejected

With both powers exhausted by boat-building fever that had formed the backbone of Britain's national self-esteem and the key German status as its equal, the war secretary, Richard Haldane, paid a secret visit to Berlin to try and halt the escalation.

The balance of national egos was simply too fragile. Germany wanted a guarantee of British neutrality in any future conflict, and Britain saw its own naval superiority as something they weren't willing to give up in exchange.

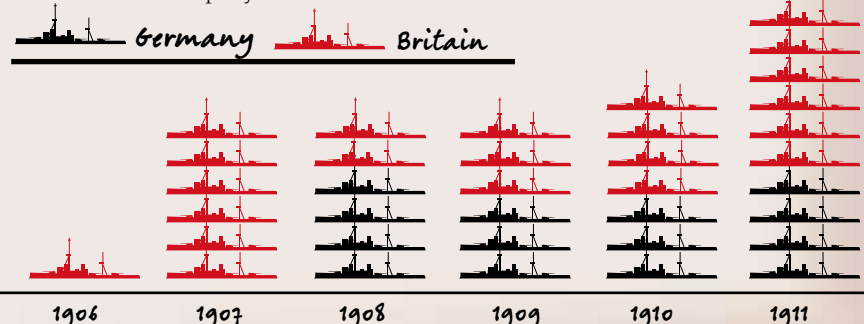
As a result, Haldane returned empty handed, the naval buildup continued unabated and, more importantly, Germany pushed Britain further into a military death-grip with Russia and France.



HMS Dreadnought under construction in 1905

THE NAVAL ARMS RACE

Battle cruisers built per year





30 September 1912

RUSSIA FLEXES ITS MILITARY MUSCLE

As the First Balkan War gets underway, Russia points its guns towards Austria

With the Balkan League of Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro gearing up to snatch territory from the Ottoman Turks in the wake of Italy's invasion of Ottoman-held Libya the year before, their great protector

- Russia - made its stance clear.

If Austria-Hungary was alarmed by this potential shakeup of the borders, the rapid mobilisation of 50,000-60,000 Russian reservists along the Polish border with Austria-Hungary alarmed them more. This was the first major aggressive move by Russia against its rivals, breaking with the tradition of covert deal-breaking that would foreshadow the events of 1914, and the robust defence of Serbia that would swallow much of the planet in war.

Russian foreign minister, Sergei Sazonov, observed that were it to come to conflict, "We can probably rely on the real support of France and England."



Russian foreign minister from 1910 to 1916, Sergei Sazonov

14 December 1913

Constantinople looks to Germany

Russia's lust for the Turkish Straits may have been pushed to second place during the Balkan wars, but they hadn't lost sight of their long-term goal. The arrival of Otto Liman von Sanders' German military mission on 14 December 1913 to train and command the first corps of the Ottoman army following humiliating Turkish defeats in the Balkans gave them even greater cause for concern than the presence of a British admiral doing the same job with the Ottoman navy.

Though Germany compromised heavily to keep the diplomatic crisis from boiling over (which in turn left the Germans with a sense of resentment), Russia's lack of backing from even the ardently anti-German Delcassé was a potent reminder to Russia that, despite the Triple Entente, its allies had very different priorities.

Viewing for the first time Germany, and not just Austria-Hungary, as a direct threat to Russia's aims, they realised that the only way they could gain control of the Turkish Straits would be against the backdrop of a wider European war, in which France and especially Britain were bound to Russia.



Liman von Sanders pictured with his Ottoman staff officers in 1914

17 October 1913

SERBIA DIGS IN OVER ALBANIA

The Second Balkan War teaches Austria the value of brute force

The success of the Balkan League in the First Balkan War alarmed Austria-Hungary no end. Now the Second Balkan War had begun, with each combatant eager to consolidate its gains. Serbia - the chief cause of their anxiety - had won crushing victories in Macedonia and then marched into Albania and Kosovo to hold vast swathes of territory. Reports of massacres followed, and even rumours that the Austro-Hungarian consul in Prizren, Kosovo, had been abducted and castrated.

Alternately claiming ignorance of any occupation and then lying about withdrawal, Austria-Hungary grew convinced that Serbia couldn't be bargained with and would only respond to force. On 17 October 1913, Austria-Hungary gave Serbia eight days to leave the contested territory or they would face military action, and Russia advised them to do as they were told. By 26 October Albania was free of Serbian troops and the success of the Albanian ultimatum - and the demonstration of a clear limit to Russia's support - would lead Vienna to try and repeat the performance in 1914, with very different consequences.



Serbian soldiers in Macedonia during the Second Balkan War

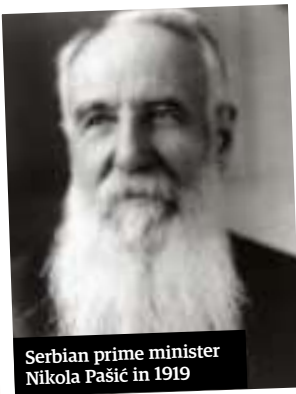
21 June 1914

SERBIA ISSUES AN OPAQUE WARNING

Serbian prime minister fails to warn of plot against Franz Ferdinand

In June 1914, the Serbian prime minister, Nikola Pašić, sent a telegram to the Serbian legation in Vienna warning of a plot against Franz Ferdinand. Belgrade's man in Vienna, Jovan Jovanović, then met with the Austro-Hungarian finance minister on 21 June 1914 to warn in the vaguest terms that a visit by the Archduke could end in tragedy. That Pašić didn't communicate the threat directly to the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, instead choosing the ultra-nationalist Jovanović - who is rumoured to have commanded guerrilla bands in

Bosnia after annexation - who could be relied upon to tell someone further from decision making and probably tell them as unconvincingly as possible, suggests that this might have been a warning Pašić felt he needed to be seen to issue, but didn't necessarily want to be heard.



Serbian prime minister Nikola Pašić in 1919

28 June 1914

Ferdinand is assassinated

On 28 June 1914 the Archduke Franz Ferdinand - nephew and heir to Emperor Franz Josef of Austria-Hungary - along with his wife - Duchess Sophie - were shot and killed while inspecting the troops in the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo. The man pulling the trigger was radicalised Bosnian-Serb student, Gavrilo Princip - an assassin from the secret military society, the Black Hand, which was equipped and supported by conspirators within the Serbian army.

Though unpopular, the Archduke's death provided all the pretext the Habsburg court needed to curtail the belligerent Serbia. Beyond the excuse it provided, Franz

Ferdinand was the leader of a think-tank within the Austro-Hungarian military that advocated reorganising the empire along federal lines.

A more representative Austria-Hungary could have silenced demands for independence from the Slavic communities in the empire - many of whom were still relatively loyal to Franz Josef himself, just critical of the state - loosening Serbia's influence in Croatia and Bosnia. It also would have undermined Russia's self-proclaimed mission to 'protect' the Slavic and Orthodox Christian people. But it was never to be.



Gavrilo Princip arrested by Austro-Hungarian police shortly after the shooting

23 July 1914

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY DECLARES WAR!

Political alliances lead to domino-effect war

Concerned that public opinion would not back war, the Austro-Hungarian government - champing at the bit to knock the Balkan upstart down a peg or two since 1912 - prepared an ultimatum that would be near impossible for Serbia to accept. Wilhelm II in Berlin voiced his support for Austria-Hungary, advising the German ambassador to Vienna, "We must finish with the Serbs, quickly. Now or

never!" Indeed the conditions were too humiliating for Serbia to agree to and, on 28 July 1914, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Like a chain of dominos tumbling in succession Russia, Germany, France, Britain and all their overseas dominions were inevitably plunged into the conflict. Italy, the Ottoman Empire, Japan and eventually the US would follow, as World War I progressed.

German trenches on the Aisne River during World War I





Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand

Sarajevo, Bosnia and
Herzegovina 28 June 1914



f all the assassinations throughout history, that of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, was both one of the

most climactic and far-reaching in terms of consequences. The shooting of Ferdinand on 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo, the modern-day capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, shook the entire world and was a major step towards the outbreak of the First World War. Many historians argue that the shooting led to the deaths of almost 10 million soldiers and countless other civilians.

The assassination was born out of a desire for Austria-Hungary's South-Slav provinces to be split from their vast empire and incorporated into Greater Serbia; a desire which had led to heightened disputes between Serbia and its neighbouring countries. This came to a head in late 1913 when Bosnian Orthodox Serb Danilo Ilić, the leader of a Serbian Black Hand terrorist cell in Sarajevo, decided to go and speak to one of the organisation's founders - Serbian Colonel C. A. Popovic. The Black Hand was a secret military society tasked with reclaiming the historical Serbian territories currently controlled by Austria-Hungary or other powers. Its motto was 'Unification or Death' and it specialised in covert operations designed to further Serbia's cause. However, Ilić no longer believed engagement in such a manner would lead to success, making a case to Popovic that

a campaign of direct action should be taken instead. After temporarily considering the Governor of Bosnia as an assassination target, it was eventually agreed that Archduke Ferdinand would be their victim.

The plan was to strike during the Archduke's visit to the city in June. The weaponry for the assassination arrived with a team of young Serbian and Bosnian Serb assassins that Ilić had recruited on 26 May, and by 4 June the six assassins were all in Sarajevo and ready to act. Along with a selection of hand guns, bombs and knives, Ilić also distributed suicide pills to the assassins - truly 'unification or death'. On the following day, Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated, along with his wife Duchess Sophie.

Despite the plans, the assassins and their masters in the Black Hand were caught, imprisoned or executed. The death of one man set in train a series of events that led to the Empire of Austria-Hungary issuing an ultimatum in July of that year. This included a list of demands that Serbia was to accept within 48 hours or face having Austria-Hungary's ambassador removed from the country. Serbia did not accept, and on 28 July both sides mobilised their armies. Due to a series of alliances struck between the Great Powers of Europe, this forced Russia, France, Britain and Germany, among others, to take sides and begin the most brutal, bloody and costly war that the world had ever seen.



Double Phaeton

The Archduke and his wife were riding in an open-top Gräf & Stift Double Phaeton car at the time of their assassination. This car was part of a motorcade of six vehicles, which carried among others the Mayor and Chief of Police of Sarajevo. On 28 June 1914, it was subjected to a bomb attack that wounded 20 people.

Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand



Last words

According to the memoir of Count Franz von Harrach, who was standing on the car's sideboard when the assassination took place, Archduke Franz Ferdinand's last words were "Sophie, Sophie, don't die. Stay alive for the children!", before stating when asked if he was injured "It is nothing."

Weapon of death

The weapon used by the assassin, Gavrilo Princip, was a Fabrique National model 1910 semi-automatic pistol. The gun was Belgian-made and used .380 ACP ammunition. When Princip fired on that fateful day, he did so twice from a distance of 1.5 metres, his shots hitting both the Archduke and his wife.

The Black Hand

The assassins were part of an underground splinter cell of Bosnian Serbs coordinated by Danilo Ilić, a member of the secret military society the Black Hand. The organisation's objective was to create an event that would lead to the splitting off of Austria-Hungary's South-Slav provinces from the empire.



AUSTRIA-HUNGARY



FRANZ FERDINAND

For his kingdom

Archduke of Austria, Royal Prince of Hungary and Bohemia Franz Ferdinand was unpopular among Serbs, who wanted to reclaim land.

Strengths A leader of great energy and physical prowess.

Weakness Distant and prone to bouts of hysteria.



1911 DOUBLE PHAETON

An expensive luxury

Offering good speed and excellent all-round visibility, the 1911 Double Phaeton was considered a luxury item for the time.

Strengths Much more mobile than foot or horse-mounted units.

Weakness Poorly armoured and cumbersome in tight spaces.



STEYR M1912 PISTOL

Durable and popular

The Austrian-made semi-automatic pistol offered impressive stopping power at short range and was small enough to be easily concealed.

Strengths A reliable pistol carried by Austria-Hungary police and army.

Weakness Poor shooting accuracy over long distances.

1 MOTORCADE FORMS

On the morning of the 28th Archduke Franz Ferdinand arrives by train in Sarajevo. Ferdinand is met by Governor Oskar Potiorek and they are led to a waiting motorcade. They step into the third car of six, a Gräf & Stift 1911 Double Phaeton, an open-topped sports car.

10 UNITED IN DEATH

When he thought all had been lost, that he had failed his and Ilić's cause, Princip saw a second chance. Like a flash Princip bolted towards the car and drawing his semi-automatic pistol fired twice from a distance of approximately 1.5 metres. The first shot hit the Archduke in his jugular vein, the second hit his wife in the abdomen. Both were killing shots and Sophie died almost immediately, with the Archduke following minutes later.

2 THE TRAP IS SET

Assassination mastermind Danilo Ilić begins to distribute his assassins on the motorcade route throughout Sarajevo. The six are all members of Young Bosnia and are armed with guns, knives, bombs and suicide pills. As the Archduke's motorcade leaves the station, Ilić paces the route.



3 MOSTAR CAFE PASSED

Ilić had placed his first assassin, Muhamed Mehmedbašić, in front of the garden on the city's well-known Mostar Cafe. He was armed with a bomb and was instructed to throw it into the motorcade. Mehmedbašić fails to act, however, as Ferdinand passes, and neither does his accomplice Vaso Čubrilović who is armed with both a bomb and gun.

9 PRINCIP'S SECOND CHANCE

Having failed to attack Ferdinand, Gavrilo Princip proceeds to a nearby food shop, Schiller's delicatessen. Upon leaving the eatery, he realises that he is staring at the royal car. The car's driver had taken a wrong turning on its way to the hospital and was now reversing with the Archduke, his wife and retinue still inside in the open-topped vehicle.

8 ADDED PROTECTION

By 10:45am, the reception for the Archduke is completed and he and his retinue leave the city's hall once more. Realising that potential assassins could still lurk, Count Franz von Harrach decides to ride on the running board of the Phaeton in a defensive position. It is agreed that the car should proceed straight to Sarajevo Hospital to avoid the city centre.

7 TOWN HALL RECEPTION

Archduke Ferdinand arrives at the town hall along with his wife and retinue, unharmed. Ferdinand, who is known for an easily disturbed temperament, protests under stress to Mayor Fehim Effendi Curčić that "I came here on a visit and I get bombs thrown at me. It is outrageous." Despite being flustered, Ferdinand allows the Mayor to proceed with the day's ceremonial speech, and then attempts to brush aside the attack by thanking the people of the city for their ovations.

THE BLACK HAND



DANILO ILIĆ

Teacher turned killer

The teacher turned assassin Danilo Ilić became radicalised in the early 1900s. On his capture, he admitted everything to try to avoid death.

Strengths Well trained in planning covert operations.

Weakness No real military experience and tactical flexibility.



ASSASSINS

Lurking in the shadows

Some were well-trained by the militaries loyal to the ruler they were trying to kill, others were mere amateurs with personal grudges.

Strengths Covert units that easily blend into crowds.

Weakness Not heavily armed and rely on shock tactics to be effective.



FN 1910 PISTOL

Enduring weapon

Remaining in production until 1983, the simple design and compact reliability of the FN 1910 made it an enduring firearm.

Strengths Compact and can be fired in six-round bursts.

Weakness Poor shooting accuracy over long distances.

4 MILJACKA RIVER

The Miljacka river snakes its way through Sarajevo, and it was on its banks that Ilić's third assassin, Nedeljko Čabrinović, was positioned to strike. Armed with a bomb, as Ferdinand's motorcade passes at 10:10am he throws the device directly at the Double Phaeton. It rebounds off the convertible's folded roof and bounces under the car following Ferdinand's. The bomb explodes, totalling the car and leaving a crater in the road. 20 passers by are hit by debris and wounded.

5 PRO PATRIA

Čabrinović, deadly deed undertaken, is quickly identified and as he is closed in on, quickly swallows his cyanide pill and jumps from the banks into the Miljacka. The pill does not have the desired effect and after vomiting severely, he lives. He is dragged from the river by police and set upon by survivors of the blast.

6 HIGH-SPEED GETAWAY

The remaining motorcade, having realised they were under attack, sped away from the blast site towards Sarajevo town hall, leaving the disabled car behind. Now travelling at high speed, the motorcade screams by Ilić's remaining three assassins - Cvjetko Popović, Gavrilo Princip and Trifun Grabež. They are unable to make their moves.

WWI FIRSTS



In a conflict that lasted four years and claimed the lives of millions, warfare as we know it today began to take shape

A

s the stalemate of trench warfare took hold, Europe came to the realisation that the nature of battle had changed irreversibly. In a time when technology was moving quickly, each side found at its disposal new ways to attack the enemy, and defend themselves. The development of the motor car led to the birth of the tank, uniforms swapped bright colours for muddy camouflage and chemical weapons became the newest method of slaughter on the battlefield. But amid the destruction, the war also saw the emergence of other innovations that we take for granted today, such as intelligence tests for soldiers and blood banks. It may have been called the 'war to end all wars', but it marked the beginning of a new age for science, society and politics.



CHEMICAL WARFARE

It was thought too horrible to ever use; so terrible it was made illegal seven years before the outbreak of war. Yet it became a valuable tool

1 The use of chemical weapons is known to antiquity, and even Leonardo da Vinci gave a 'recipe' for suffocating enemies. But it was not until about 5pm on 22 April 1915 that Allied troops in Ypres saw a greeny-yellow cloud wafting across no-man's land towards them. Although illegal under the 1907 Hague Convention, the Germans had begun the large-scale use of poison gas. By the end of 1915, both sides had the noxious weapon in their armouries. Mustard gas caused the highest number of casualties. Once inhaled, it rotted the body from inside and out; the skin blistered and the pain was almost unbearable. The symptoms

could last for five weeks before death, and if a soldier did survive, they were scarred for life.

Neither side was prepared for this. At first the only protection was a cloth soaked in urine clamped against the mouth and nose, but by 1915 the entire British army had been equipped with the newly designed Hypo helmet. These consisted of a flannel bag with a celluloid window, covering the entire head. Then, in 1916, troops were issued with a Small Box Respirator. This had a mouthpiece connected via a hose to a box filter. It was this design that would become the standard for many years to come.

Soldiers in gas masks at the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917



GAS MASKS

2 The Small Box Respirator, developed in 1916, was the first practical and effective gas mask ever made

Metal pipe

Exhaled air was breathed out along a metal pipe and exited via a flapper-type check valve outside the mouth.

Eye pieces

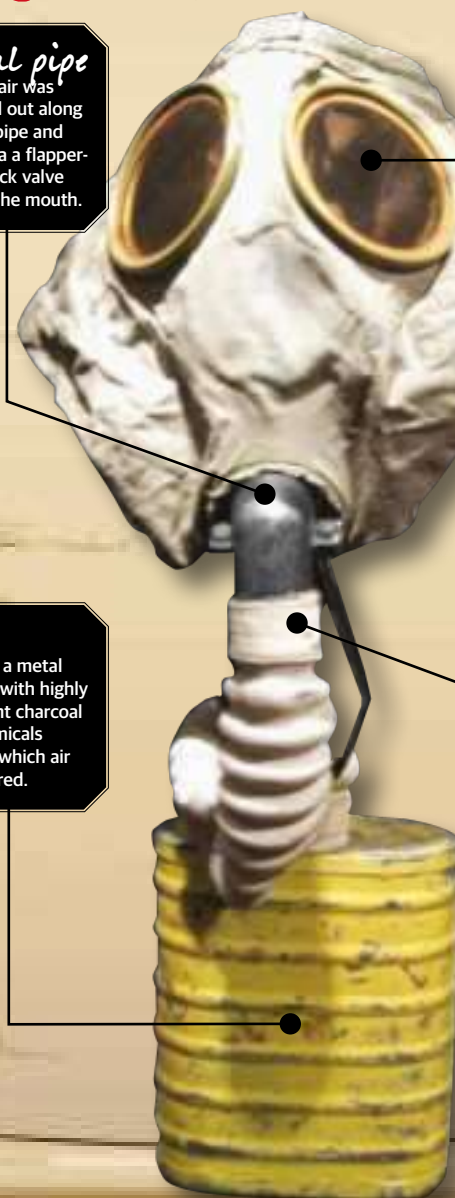
These were made of cellulose. Condensation could easily be wiped away by pushing in the baggy fabric from the outside of the mask.

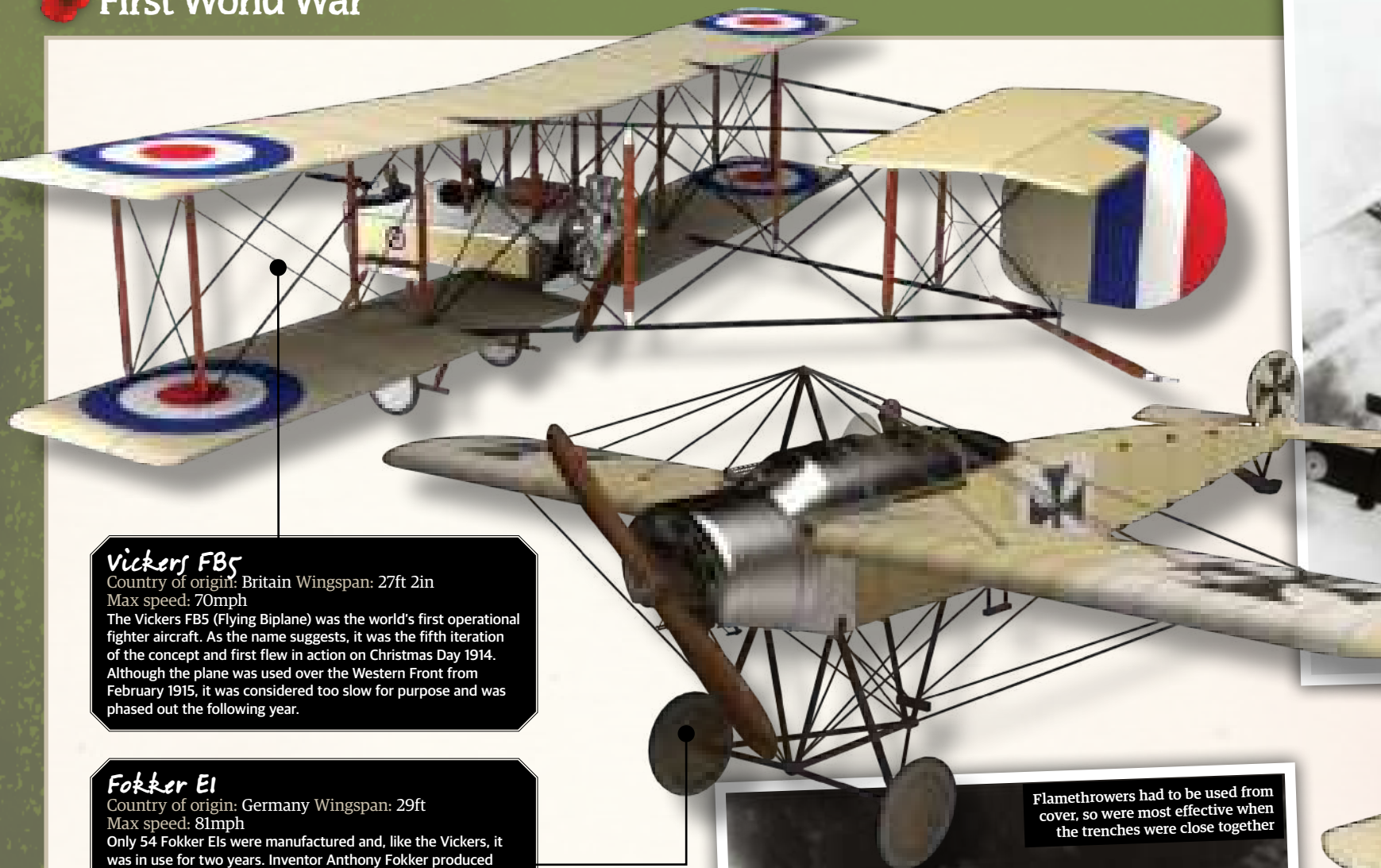
Box

This was a metal tin filled with highly absorbent charcoal and chemicals through which air was filtered.

Hose

The filtered air was inhaled through a rubber hose, which connected to a snorkel-shaped mouthpiece held between the teeth.





Vickers FB5

Country of origin: Britain Wingspan: 27ft 2in
Max speed: 70mph

The Vickers FB5 (Flying Biplane) was the world's first operational fighter aircraft. As the name suggests, it was the fifth iteration of the concept and first flew in action on Christmas Day 1914. Although the plane was used over the Western Front from February 1915, it was considered too slow for purpose and was phased out the following year.

Fokker EI

Country of origin: Germany Wingspan: 29ft
Max speed: 81mph

Only 54 Fokker EIs were manufactured and, like the Vickers, it was in use for two years. Inventor Anthony Fokker produced about 40 types of plane for Germany during the war and the EI was the first to enter service with the air force. Its use was the start of the 'Fokker Scourge', when German monoplanes dominated the Western Front.



Flamethrowers had to be used from cover, so were most effective when the trenches were close together

STEEL HELMETS

The days of wearing armour on the battlefield were thought over until soldiers encountered shrapnel

3 In times when warfare was fought hand-to-hand, no knight would go into battle without a helmet that covered his entire head as protection from sword blows. But as close combat ended and camouflage and mobility became more important, cloth headgear was introduced. These gave no protection against World War I's modern artillery weapons, though, and in 1915 France re-evaluated its uniform policy.

While on a hospitals tour, Intendant-General August-Louis Adrian, in charge of military supplies for the French government, asked a soldier how he had survived head wounds, and was told he had worn his metal cooking bowl under his cap. Adrian began experimenting with headgear and borrowed from the casque du pompier worn by the Parisian Fire Brigade. The M15 Adrian helmet was introduced in July and was an instant success, but its 0.7mm thickness meant it only protected heads from shrapnel and shell bursts, not bullets.



FLAMETHROWER

The flamethrower looked a terrifying weapon, but in reality its bark was worse than its burn

4 The flamethrower was invented in 1900 by Richard Fiedler, in Berlin, although it would be 11 years before one was issued to the German army. The close-quarters fighting of trench warfare increased the need for short-range weapons, and the flamethrower was first used on 26 February 1915 by the German 3rd Guard Pioneer Regiment at Malancourt. Six were

used at Ypres, where the trenches were fewer than five yards apart. However, most casualties came from troops running to escape the flames and being shot rather than being caught in the fire, and the ones in use in 1915 only had flammable liquid for two minutes of action. Despite being cumbersome, the Germans used flamethrowers in more than 300 battles during the war.

FLEETS OF FIGHTING AIRCRAFT

From airships (the most famous probably being the German Zeppelin) to fighter biplanes, World War I was the time when aircraft came into their own

Morane-Saulnier L

Country of origin: France Wingspan: 36ft 8in
Max speed: 78mph

The Morane-Saulnier L, armed with a Lewis Gun, was the first fighter to fire through the propeller, which had protective wedges to deflect those bullets that hit it. Unusually, the plane or variations of it were used by the French Air Force, the Royal Flying Corps, Royal Naval Air Service and the Imperial Russian Air Service and under licence by Germany.

As aerial warfare took off, dogfights became more common over the Western front

On 21 June 1917, Orville Wright wrote in a letter: "When my brother and I built and flew the first man-carrying flying machine, we thought we were introducing into the world an invention that would make further wars practically impossible... We thought governments would realise the impossibility of winning by surprise attacks." By this, Wright meant that planes would be used for reconnaissance, so any large troop movement would be immediately spotted. Indeed, reconnaissance was an important task throughout the war, but equally important was preventing the enemy from doing so. The French were the first to develop an effective solution. On 1 April 1915, French pilot Roland Garros took to the air in a plane armed with a machine gun that fired through its propeller, and on his first flight he shot down a German observation plane. Purpose-built fighters and bombers were soon being developed by both sides, with dogfights becoming a regular occurrence over European skies. In April 1917, the average lifespan of a British pilot was just 11 days. After the war, Wright wrote: "The aeroplane has made war so terrible that I do not believe any country will again care to start a war."

AIRCRAFT CARRIER

As soon as planes were in the air, new ways of launching them were quickly developed

The first Royal Navy aircraft carrier, a ship adapted with a flight deck, was HMS Hermes in 1912. It carried two seaplanes that were launched on trolleys. Two years later, the first attacks were launched from the former Channel steamers Empress, Engadine and Riviera at anchor in Heligoland to bomb the Zeppelin sheds at the naval base of Cuxhaven. That year, the first warship built as an aircraft carrier (although not designed initially as such) was HMS Ark Royal, which was 366 feet long. The hangars below decks could accommodate ten seaplanes. It was sent to the Dardanelles and the first plane flew from it in February 1915. HMS Furious was the first aircraft carrier for the use of wheeled planes, however, planes were unable to return and had to finish their mission at a land base.



TANKS

Until World War I, soldiers were used to being confronted by mounted troops on the battlefield. When the first tanks rumbled into action, one German cried: "The Devil is coming!"

7 The advent of the traction engine and automobile made tanks possible. Although the first self-propelled armoured vehicle was built in 1900 in England for the Boer War, engineers in France, Austria-Hungary, Germany and England were dismissed when they proposed tracked armoured vehicles. In World War I, armoured cars were improvised in Belgium, France, and Britain only to prove useless in trenches. The mud was too deep and too thick for them to make any progress and they soon became bogged down and immobile. Having been rejected several times, governments finally realised they needed vehicles that could traverse trenches, not get stuck going up hills, cut through barbed wire and provide cover for infantrymen. The first

tank, built in England in 1915, was nicknamed 'Little Willie'. A second iteration, called 'Big Willie' then 'Mother', followed. They first appeared in battle at Flers-Courcelette in 1916 and terrified the Germans. One tank captured a village and another a trench of 300 Germans. What the enemy didn't know, however, was that the first tanks were hopelessly inefficient: the crews were untrained and 17 of the original 49 broke down on the way to the front; of the remainder, only 21 saw action. It was at the Battle of Cambrai in 1917 that British tanks achieved their first success, although these versions were too slow, so in 1918 the 14-ton Medium A appeared with a speed of eight miles per hour and a range of 80 miles. The tank got its name as it looked like a vehicle for carrying water.

British Mark I

Pressure from Winston Churchill forced the War Office to produce an armoured bulletproof vehicle; production began in 1916. Not everyone was impressed.

Field Marshal Douglas Haig said: "The idea that cavalry will be replaced by these iron coaches is absurd."

Shape

The rear of the tank was rhomboidal in shape thus allowing the vehicle to keep its tracks on the ground.

Ammunition

The bullets for the gun were 2.24 inches in length. They were stored in special protective metal cases.

Engine

The back of the tank was taken up with the engine, which made it insufferably hot for the crew with temperatures reaching 50°C.

Wheelie useless

The tank had two wheels at the back, supposedly to aid steering, but they were of next to no use and easily damaged.

Entry

The crew got into the tank via 'sponsons', armoured boxes on the side of the hull.

Weaponry

The tank had two machine guns and two six-pounder cannons.

Maker William Foster & Co
First use 15 September 1916
Number built 150
Crew 8 (4 drivers, 4 to fire weapons)
Weight 28 tons
Length 33ft
Weaponry 2 x 2.24in Hotchkiss six-pounder cannons
Speed 4mph
Range 24 miles
Engine 105hp Foster-Daimler



Roof

The tank did not have a gun turret because it was thought it might cause the vehicle to tip over. Instead, wire mesh was spread across a wooden frame to protect the crew from grenade attacks.

The Mark I was the world's first tank to enter combat

Tracks

The tracks could propel the vehicle forward at four miles per hour.

Manpower

Each tank had a crew of eight – two drivers at the front, two at the back and four to fire the weaponry.

Initials

The first tanks had HMLS stencilled on their sides. The letters stood for His Majesty's Land Ship, the original name for the vehicle.



GUIDE DOGS

8 The Austrian War Dog Institute at Oldenburg opened the first guide dog training school in August 1916. Many men had been blinded by mustard gas or as the result of shell shock, and Paul Feyen, a blinded veteran, received the first dog. Within a year, 100 dogs had been trained and presented and 539 dogs were issued by 1919.



MOBILE X-RAYS

9 In 1914, Marie Curie created 'les petites Curies', mobile radiography units allowing X-rays to be taken on or near the battlefield. She started France's first military radiology centre and arranged for 20 mobile X-ray vehicles as well as another 200 X-ray units to be installed at field hospitals. More than 1 million wounded soldiers were treated thanks to her X-ray units.



BLOOD BANKS

10 The problem facing war medics was preserving blood for more than a few hours. In 1917, Dr Oswald Robertson, an American serving with Canadian forces, conceived the idea of storing blood corpuscles in jars of glucose. They were brought in refrigerated ambulances to the front and kept cool until needed, whereupon a saline solution was added to make them usable.



ENLISTED WOMEN

Women did much more than keep the home fires burning. Thousands volunteered to serve

11

As the men went off to fight, the women were left behind. Suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst encouraged women to do more than "nurse soldiers or knit

socks." This led to the first government-sponsored organisation, the Women's Forage Corps, followed by the Women's Forestry Corps and the Women's Land Army. And in 1917, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was founded. In March, the first 14 WAACS - cooks and waitresses - were sent to the front. Despite their military service, the women were expected to do clerical work, cooking, cleaning and other 'menial' tasks. The corps was disbanded in September 1921.

In the USA, they began introducing Yeoman (F) in the US Naval Reserve during World War I. They were usually called Yeowomen or Yeomanettes, and the first was Loretta Perfectus Walsh. Receiving the same pay as the men, \$28.75 a month, the Yeomanettes, like their British equivalents, worked as typists, stenographers, accountants, bookkeepers and telephonists. It was, as in so many other aspects of this war, the technology that allowed the 11,274 recruited Yeomanettes to work. Many were stationed in the nation's capital, although Yeomen (F) served in England, France, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the Canal Zone, Guam and the Territory of Hawaii. The first black women to serve in the US Navy were 16 Yeomanettes from some of 'Washington's elite black families'.

The Big Four: Lloyd George, Italian premier Vittorio Orlando, French prime minister Georges Clemenceau and Woodrow Wilson



Joy Bright Hancock served in World War I and World War II, becoming one of the first female officers in 1942



The WAACs marching in London at the end of World War I in 1918

PRESIDENTIAL TRIP TO EUROPE

President Woodrow Wilson told Americans his '14 points' would secure post-war peace. He arrived in Europe to see them put in to action

12

With the war over, now came the battle for peace. President and Mrs Wilson arrived in Paris on a sunny 14 December 1918, the first trip to Europe by a serving president. Wilson was annoyed that the Peace Conference was delayed - the Germans and Austrians were in no hurry, the French blasé and Lloyd George awaited the result of the Coupon General Election. During their time in France, the Wilsons were treated to innumerable meetings, lunches and dinners and spent Christmas Day in the freezing cold at Chaumont with

the American Expeditionary Force. The next day, the Wilsons set out for England, where they were met by King George and Queen Mary at Charing Cross Station before they were taken to Buckingham Palace. The president was also entertained at No 10, Guildhall and Mansion House before returning to France on 1 January 1919 and then moving on to Italy. Back in Paris, Wilson was impatient that the Peace Conference should start. It opened on 18 January. Five major peace treaties emerged including Versailles and the Covenant of the League of Nations.



One of the tests in Army Beta assessed the recruits' geometrical construction ability

IQ TESTS FOR SOLDIERS

In a bid to avoid a random selection of soldiers as officers or cannon fodder, the USA introduced aptitude tests for their military personnel

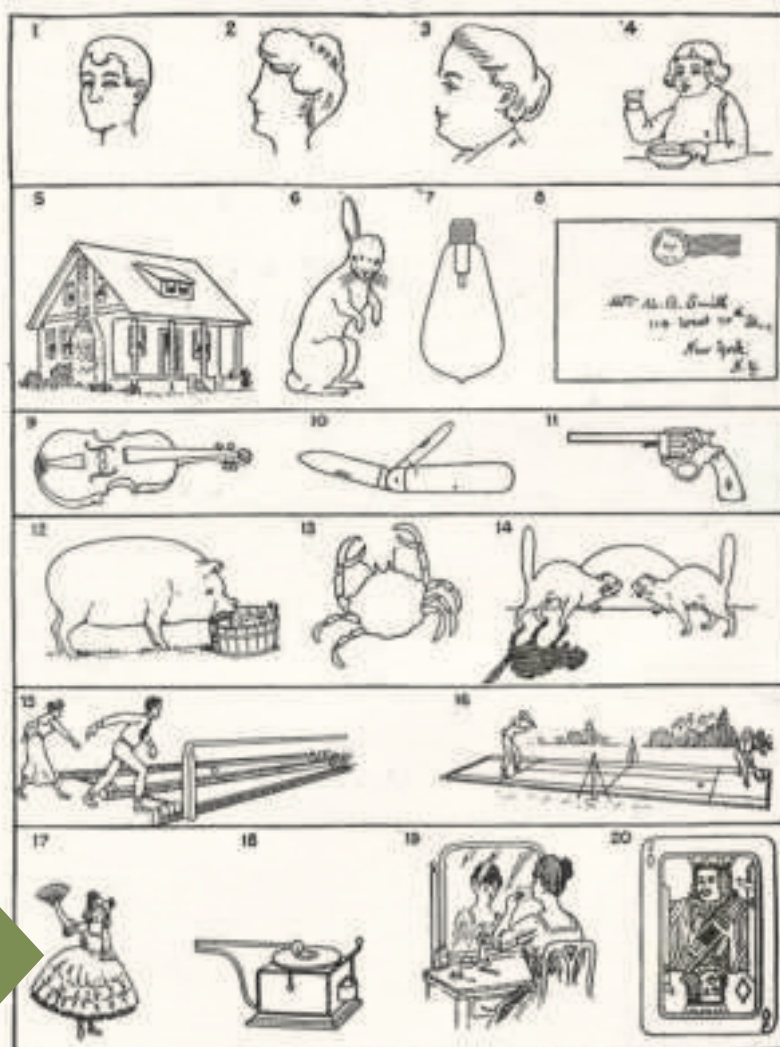
13 In 1916, Professor Lewis M Terman of Stanford University developed the first test to examine the aptitude of military personnel. More than 170,000 US soldiers took it during the war.

Originally, it comprised two examinations: those who were literate took the Alpha test while any illiterate and non-English-speaking soldiers took the Beta test. The Alpha test measured "verbal ability, numerical ability, ability to follow directions, and knowledge of information." Beta was a non-verbal test and examiners used charts and mime.

The results of both were graded A ('very superior' or potential officer class) to E ('very inferior' resulting in a low rank or even discharge). The Beta results were additionally checked against men in institutions to ensure the soldier being tested was of genuine low intelligence and not a malingerer. Both Alpha and Beta were discontinued after World War I and the results were published in *The Army Report* in 1921.

The Army Beta test

Illiterate, unschooled and non-English-speaking recruits were given this test to complete. Would you have passed? Can you tell what's missing from each image?



Answers: 1 Mouth; 2 Eye; 3 Nose; 4 Hand; 5 Chimney; 6 Ear; 7 Filament; 8 Return address; 9 Strings; 10 Corkscrew; 11 Trigger; 12 Tail; 13 Claw; 14 Shadow; 15 Ball; 16 Net; 17 Arm; 18 Speaker; 19 Arm in mirror; 20 Diamond

What was it like?

LONDON, 1915



The Royal Exchange, situated in the heart of London

Discover what life was like in a city in the grip of a war like nothing the world had ever seen before

Britain in 1915 was a far cry from the representative democracy it is today, with women being denied the same voting rights allotted to their male counterparts and society very much divided by class. The first-ever industrialised war saw millions of soldiers sent abroad to fight but the German Zeppelin raids on the capital ensured that for the first time in modern history, the whole country was at conflict; no one was really safe. As such, the entire nation was geared toward the war effort, with virtually all of

the country's population and resources being mobilised to contribute in the most efficient manner possible.

Although this state of total war wasn't as pronounced as it would be in WWII, with the damage caused by the Zeppelins and along some coastal towns by the German Navy not as widespread or destructive as the Blitz, it was still an uncertain and terrifying time for the country. London itself was the hub of the war effort, with events like the 1915 Treaty of London (which saw Italy join the Allies) highlighting its importance not just to Britain, but Europe as a whole.



Patriotic propaganda was used to encourage women to aid the war effort



FINANCE

GDP was on the rise in 1915 and would increase by around 14 per cent between the war's beginning and end. While the rise of industries like shipbuilding and munitions also helped - coupled with what was saved by food rationing - the UK was forced to borrow heavily from the US.



INDUSTRY

With the country focused on the war effort, industry was angled as such, with many sent to work in munitions factories. Many workers were women taking the places of their male counterparts, with 212,000 working in these factories.



ART

Much of the art during this period was heavily influenced by the war and much propaganda was produced. Films like *The Battle Of The Somme* in 1916 were very popular and writers like HG Wells and Rudyard Kipling wrote government-assigned pieces.



TECHNOLOGY

With most of the country's resources being dedicated toward the war effort, it is perhaps inevitable that some of the main technological advances during this time were weapons based. One such advance was the first British tank, known as *Little Willie*, which weighed 16.5 tons and housed a crew of six.



MILITARY

Around 6 million men fought overseas during WWI, with the British Navy also playing a part in subduing their German counterparts. Although many enthusiastically enlisted for the armed forces, by 1916 conscription was introduced for those aged between 18 to 41.

The first tanks bore only a superficial resemblance to today's behemoths



Newspaper salesmen advertising their daily papers



MEDIA

The government worked with newspapers and magazines during this period, using censorship and propaganda to raise spirits and counter German efforts at the same. The Defence of the Realm Act restricted what newspapers could publish - the most popular of which were the *Times*, *Daily Telegraph* and *Morning Post*.

Women were recruited to work in the munitions factories



GOVERNMENT

Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith had been in power since 1908. By 1915, pressure was growing on him, with many believing he was not suited to be a wartime leader and fellow Liberal David Lloyd George replaced him in 1916.



Men had to pass a physical exam before joining the armed forces



ZEPPELIN

BRITAIN'S ORIGINAL BLITZ

How Germany's marauding airship fleets created the first aerial bombing campaign in history, and pioneered a new way of war

As well as coastal towns, Zeppelins also terrorised major British cities such as Liverpool and London on a regular basis

WARS

19

January 1915, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, England. Samuel Smith, a 53-year-old cobbler, is working late. He needs to - he needs the money to provide for his aging mother and the two orphans she's recently taken into her home. At about 0830 hours, as he's finishing up his work, he hears a distant throbbing. It grows ever louder, until his workshop is shuddering and its windows are rattling in their frames.

A mystified Smith lays down his hammer, opens his workshop door and steps out into the cold, clear night. He stands on the cobbles and looks up: above him, almost skimming the rooftops, is what must have looked like something conjured up by HG Wells or Jules

Verne. A giant silver airship, more than 500 feet long, looms above, lit up by the harsh moonlight. It is so vast, in fact, that it's longer than the street Smith is standing in. He watches mesmerised as it rumbles overhead right up until the moment the 110-pound bomb it drops spirals its way down to where he is standing. He is killed instantly and, along with his 72-year-old neighbour Martha Taylor, becomes the earliest victim of an air raid over Britain.

Back in Germany, Commander Peter Strasser, of the German Navy's recently formed Airship Division, is thrilled. His plan to bring an end to the stalemate on the Western Front's battlefields by bombing Britain's civilian population into submission has got off to a successful start. War will never be fought the same way again.

Inside a war zeppelin

The terrifying world of the floating killing platforms, and the men who manned them miles above the ground

Both the German army and navy operated zeppelin crews during the war. Thanks to the efforts of Peter Strasser, however, its navy really pioneered and pushed the bombing of civilian targets in Britain.

Whichever branch of the services these soldiers came from, those who manned the zeppelins were essentially Special Forces operatives. All were highly trained volunteers, who conducted high-risk operations from deep behind enemy lines, using state-of-the-art technology. Science was initially on their side, and for a brief moment in 1915-16, during the so-called 'Zeppelin Scourge', the bombing behemoths that they manned ruled the skies. They were giants in the sky who simply couldn't be slain. However, as time went on and the technological balance began to shift, their missions became increasingly perilous.

Even without the emerging dangers of weaponry that could blast them out of the skies, however, the life of a zeppelin crewman was hazardous. Their workplace was a world of cogs



Cloud cars usually carried one observer who would relay navigation instructions

and levers, suspended two miles above the Earth's surface by a battleship-sized balloon filled with highly flammable hydrogen.

While these floating death traps grew increasingly bigger as the war went on, crew sizes remained roughly the same as planners wrestled with equations about weight and altitude. On average, 20 men were required to steer these monstrous killing platforms across the Channel to their targets. Their roles included airship commanders, wireless operators, navigators,

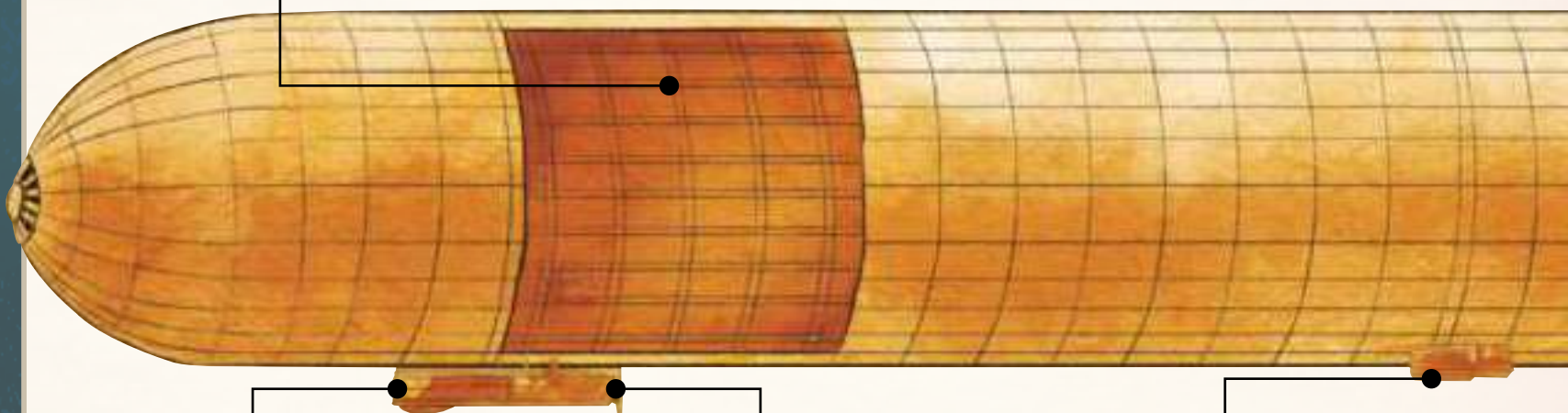
ruddermen and elevatormen, who would control direction and height, sail makers to repair tears and bullet holes in the hull, plus an assortment of mechanics and bombardiers.

All crewmen were also trained to use the on-board defensive machine guns, although these were often left behind or dispensed with once airborne, along with parachutes. Both items were simply considered unnecessary weight in an environment where being able to climb rapidly was your only real hope of surviving combat.

Gas bags

As opposed to blimps, which are merely pressurised balloons, zeppelins were kept aloft by thousands of bags filled with hydrogen gas. These were made from goldbeater's skin - which is actually the outer membrane of a cow's intestine. Primarily used as sausage skin, so much of it was demanded by the zeppelin factories that sausage production was suspended in parts of Germany during the war.

"Whichever branch of the services they came from, those who manned the zeppelins were essentially Special Forces"



Forward control cabin

This was the main flight deck where the airship commander, navigator, ruddermen, elevatormen and wireless operator would have worked. Most of the engineers were stationed in the rear gondola of the zeppelin serving the main engines in an environment that was as noisy as it was dangerous.

Engines

These were housed on the gondolas. Although they varied in size and weight, a typical engine for later R-class airships was the six-cylinder Maybach HSLu. It produced 240hp and six were used to power the ship - one on the front cabin, two on the side gondolas and three on the rear. They could produce a top speed of 63 miles per hour and could propel the zeppelin to over 13,000 feet.

Cloud car

It may look like a high-risk fairground ride, but this was actually an observation platform. If a zeppelin became temporarily unaware of its position, an observer could be winched down from inside the hull up to half a mile below to spot for landmarks. He could then relate back to the bombardiers above by telephone. To make it safer, a lightning conductor was built into the suspension cable.

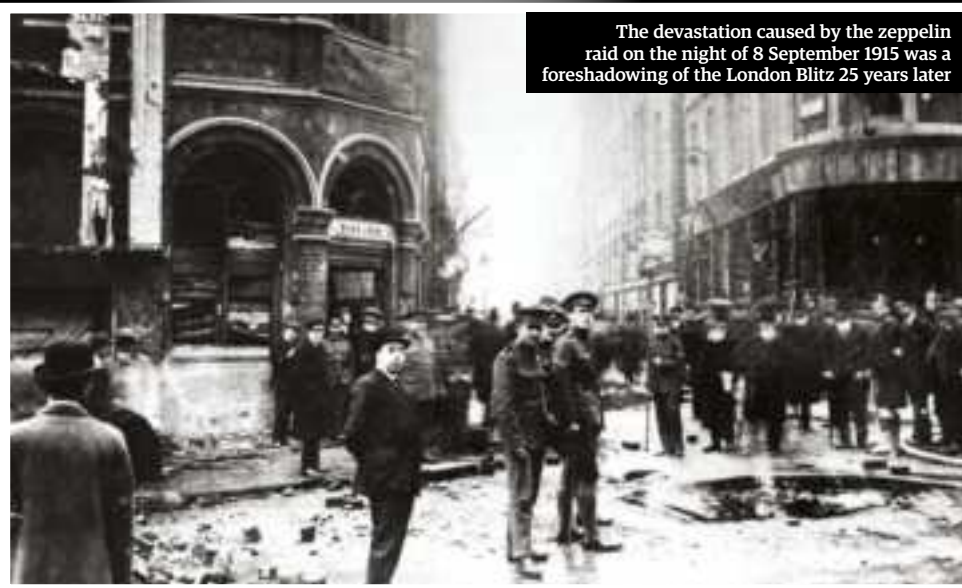
THE ZEPPELIN BLITZ

25 years before Nazi bombers set London ablaze, Britain's capital was attacked by airship raiders

On the night of 8 September 1915, Zeppelin LZ13 slunk over the Norfolk coast. It then followed rivers and canals south until its commander Kapitänleutnant Heinrich Mathy spotted London's lights sparkling on the horizon. His intended target was in sight.

This wasn't the first time a zeppelin had bombed London. There had been three earlier attacks on the capital, the first in May 1915 and the last just the previous night. In total, 35 civilians had been killed and a further 121 wounded. All of those attacks, however, had been on the city's suburbs east of the Tower of London. Kaiser Wilhelm, the German emperor, had been very specific about where his marauding knights of the sky could attack. After all, he had family in town - George V was his first cousin and the Tower was the British king's most easterly royal property in the city. Tonight, however, would be different. Tonight, Mathy had the kaiser's blessing to torch the heart of the city. London was about to experience its first Blitz.

Mathy released his first bombs from 8,500 feet, hitting Euston station at about 10.40pm. Lit up by searchlights and with shrapnel from London's anti-aircraft batteries exploding all around him, he quickly headed south. Next to be hit were Bloomsbury and Holborn. The city below him was now on fire, and the streets were filling up with the wounded and the dead. Passing north of Saint Paul's, Mathy's zeppelin rained down incendiary bombs on textile warehouses as he steered towards Liverpool Street station. Here, he unleashed his deadliest attack, when a single bomb killed nine people on a bus on the street.



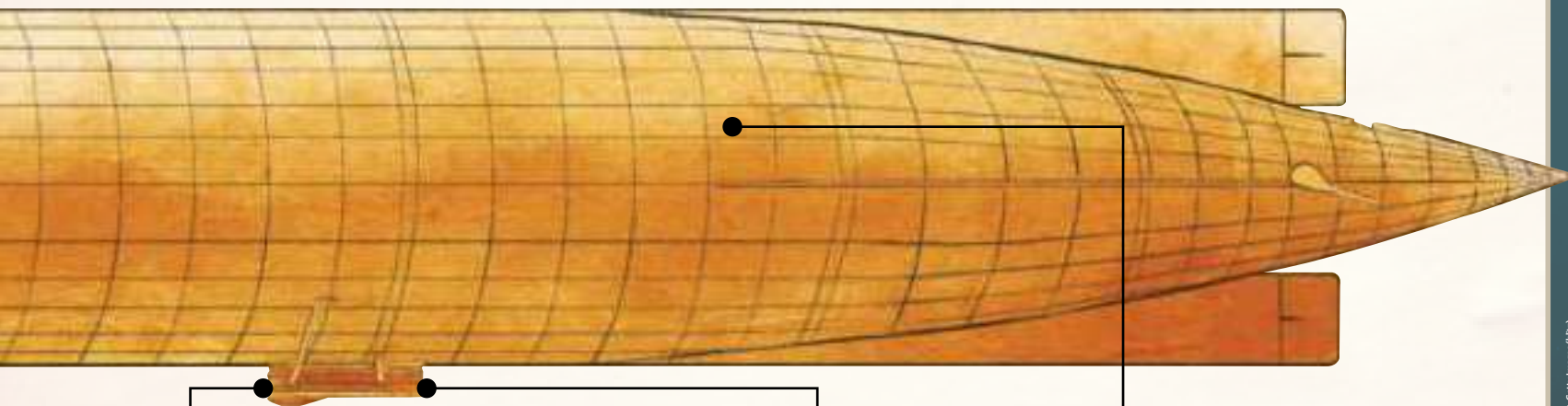
The devastation caused by the zeppelin raid on the night of 8 September 1915 was a foreshadowing of the London Blitz 25 years later

By the time LZ13 crept into clouds and back across the Channel, London - the heart of the British Empire - was ablaze. 55 incendiary bombs had left a river of fire burning in the zeppelin's wake. Mathy had also unleashed 15 high-explosive bombs, including one with a 660-pound payload - far bigger than anything that had previously been dropped on Britain. The night-time raid had caused the modern equivalent of £23 million worth of damage to the city, had injured 87 Londoners and killed 22 more.

It had also proven that London was defenceless against air attack. Six planes had intercepted the zeppelin, with zero success. The 26 anti-aircraft

guns, meanwhile, were too feeble to hit the airship. When some anti-aircraft fire had come close, Mathy simply took the zeppelin up to 11,200 feet, well out of their range, and carried on bombing from there.

It was shock and awe, early 20th century style. As the writer DH Lawrence, who witnessed the raid, wrote in a letter to a friend: "Then we saw the zeppelin above us, amid a gleaming of clouds, high up... and underneath it were splashes of fire as the shells fired from Earth burst. It seemed as if the cosmic order were gone, as if there had come a new order. The Moon is not queen of the sky at night. It seems the zeppelin's taken control."



Machine Gunner

There were usually several fixed points both on top of the zeppelin and beneath it where machine gunners, operating in temperatures as low as -30 degrees Celsius, could defend the airships against attack from fighters. Gunners wore helmets, gloves and cold-weather clothing once airborne, but often no parachutes.

Bomb bay

Located in the bottom of the hull, this could hold payloads that weighed up to 4,000 pounds. The bombs were usually a mix of larger high-explosives designed to shatter rooftops and smaller incendiary devices that could then be dropped into buildings to set them ablaze, as was the case with the London raid of 8 September 1915.

Structure

Zeppelins were typically built around a rigid skeleton of strong but lightweight aluminium girders over which a huge skin, made from chemically treated cotton, was then stretched. A main cable ran, attached at various points to the framework, through the entire length of the hull to give the ship longitudinal strength.



Britain's German population was targeted after the raids. Mobs, like this one in East London, attacked their homes and businesses



Total war in Britain

Germany hoped to win the war by smashing British spirits at home. The zeppelin raids, however, had a different effect

The British public's response to the zeppelin raids wasn't what Paul Strasser had hoped for. Rather than breaking the nation's will, what began to evolve was a nascent Blitz spirit. When London was first bombed in May 1915, young children were among those killed. The shock-horror headlines that reported this news the next day accused Germans of being 'baby killers'. Riots erupted, German businesses were attacked, and the thousands of Germans then resident in the UK were interned.

After the more serious bombing of central London in September 1915, however, the nation's anger shifted towards the British government for its failure to provide adequate protection for its citizens. For centuries the Royal Navy had kept the nation safe, but who could counter this new threat from the air? A radical rethink was required.

Britain had no independent air force at the time, so pilots from both the army's Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Navy Air Service were recalled from France to defend the home front. By the end of the war, the Royal Air Force had been established, and the foundations of an aerial defence network laid - one that would, 22 years later, save the nation during the Battle of Britain.

ZEPPELIN RAIDER HEINRICH MATHY

In one of the war's deadliest theatres, he proved to be Germany's most daring warrior

Heinrich Mathy was the most audacious zeppelin raider of the war and a household name in both Germany and Britain. Although he forged his reputation in the skies, he was a sailor by profession - one who had been fast-tracked through the service, taking command of his first ship while still in his 20s.

While training to become a staff officer at the German Naval Academy in 1913, however, he'd encountered and become infatuated with Count von Zeppelin's new lighter-than-air ships. This brought him to the notice of Peter Strasser, boss of the navy's Airships Division, and by January 1915, Mathy was taking part in his first zeppelin raid against Britain.

Over the next two years, Mathy took part in 14 more raids - more than any other captain - dropping 38 tons of explosives in the process. He's best remembered for his attack on London on 8 September 1915. It was the most devastating raid of the campaign, causing, in monetary terms alone, more than a sixth of all the damage done by zeppelins to British towns.

Cool and daring, Mathy seemed unstoppable, but he was playing a high-risk game, and he knew it. On hearing that the British had managed to down their first

zeppelin, he wrote: "It's only a question of time before we join the rest. If anyone says he's not haunted by visions of burning airships, then he's a braggart." He joined 'the rest' when his zeppelin was shot down over Hertfordshire in October 1916. He was 33 years old.



Mathy jumped to his death when his zeppelin caught fire during his final raid. This photo shows the ghoulish mark his body made when it hit the ground

The end of the zeppelins

Once thought unstoppable, the mighty zeppelins' dominance of the skies turned out to be short-lived. Their legacy, however, is daunting

Commander Peter Strasser dreamed up the zeppelin bombing campaign. "If what we do is frightful," he once said, "then may frightfulness be Germany's salvation"

On the night of 2 September 1916, almost a year after the Mathy raid, a larger zeppelin appeared over London. The SL11 was part of a fleet of 16 airships that had come to bomb targets all over England in what was to be the largest zeppelin raid of the war.

Within minutes, however, the SL11 had been tagged by searchlights. Thunderous anti-aircraft fire began ripping bright holes in the night all around it, and a British fighter was attacking. The plane was piloted by 21-year-old Lieutenant Leefe Robinson of the Royal Flying Corps. This was only his second time in combat against a zeppelin, but he could see the SL11 clearly above him at 12,000 feet, almost stationary as if lassoed by the searchlight beams.

Robinson had with him a new combination of ammunition in his machine gun's three drums - a mix of incendiary rounds and explosive bullets. Flying directly below the SL11, he strafed it, emptying an entire drum into its belly. When it had no effect, Robinson tried again. Roaring beneath its underside once more he unloaded his second drum into the airship's guts.

When that didn't work, he decided to try something a bit different.

He lined himself up for a final run and, as he came in, rather than rake the ship's entire hull, he concentrated all of his firepower on one spot near the rear. As he

did so, a patch of bright orange appeared in the zeppelin's skin, and then spread rapidly outwards as the hydrogen beneath it erupted in flames. The watching Londoners below threw their hats in the air as the titan above them buckled, twisted, and tumbled from the skies.

It was the beginning of the end for the zeppelin as a weapon of war. Super zeppelins were built, which were capable of reaching greater altitudes, but aircraft technology was improving rapidly too. By the end of the war, about 30 zeppelins had been lost on combat operations. The last one to be shot down on 5 August 1918 was the L-70, then the biggest airship in the world. At its helm that night was the zeppelin's greatest champion, the man who was still stubbornly insisting that the airships would bring Germany victory, Paul Strasser. He was killed along with the rest of his crew in what would be the final raid of the war.

Strasser's bombing campaign had killed 557 and injured 1,358, but his belief that he could bring about Britain's surrender by terrorising its citizens had been wrong. In attempting to do so, however, he bequeathed the world the idea that the strategic aerial bombing of civilians was justified. As he himself put it: "We who strike the enemy where his heart beats have been slandered as 'baby killers'... Nowadays there's no such animal as a non-combatant. Modern warfare is total warfare." In this, Strasser was to be proved right, and his appalling prophecy would reach its apogee 30 years later at Dresden and Hiroshima.



A vintage postcard shows the remains of the SL11 downed by Leefe Robinson (inset). The young flyer received the VC for his actions but didn't survive the war



Trench Warfare

Advancing painfully slowly in the slog of WWI, France, 1914-1918



The assassination of Franz Ferdinand may have lit the touch paper for WWI but the conflict erupted due to a number of reasons, such as France and

Russia forming a military alliance in 1894, which increased German isolation, and the second Balkan War. In the conflict, which lasted from 1914 to 1918, the countries were divided into two groups: the Allies, led by Great Britain, France and the United States, and the Central Powers, which included Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey. During the first years of the conflict, the armies stood still in trench lines or position wars. This caused the loss of thousands of lives and material resources as battles were often long affairs, such as the Battle of Verdun, which lasted a gruelling ten months.

Rearguard

The heavy artillery was commonly placed around 10km (6mi) away from the front line. It was moved forward as the infantry advanced.

Shell-shock

Millions of men suffered psychological trauma as a result of their war experience. For many a large part of this was caused by the all-too frequent artillery bombardments which dished out death seemingly at random and meant a soldier was never truly safe.

The Voie Sacrée

This was the road that kept the French front line fully supplied. Between 3,000 and 3,500 trucks used it every day to transport soldiers, war supplies, food and to evacuate those who were injured.

Fire power

Machine guns were fairly primitive weapons in 1914 but by the end of the conflict they had evolved rapidly and by 1918, they could spit out over a thousand small-calibre rounds per minute. These weapons had the power to turn the course of a battle.

No-man's-land

This is the term used to describe the land between opposite enemy lines. It was frequently covered with mines and craters caused by bombs and as such was difficult to cross, which contributed to the lack of progress made by both sides.

Wire fences

The trenches were protected by long lines of wires with intertwined barbs. They constituted a great challenge for the advancement of the enemy infantry units and many men became tangled on them and provided their enemy with an easy target.

Aviation

Planes frequently flew over trenches, whether firing at the enemy with machine guns or while engaged in a dogfight or a scouting mission.

Tunnels

Some German shelters were connected by tunnels that allowed the transportation of soldiers without the need to be exposed to enemy fire.

Front line

The first trench was usually the most dangerous one as it was closest to the action. Soldiers had to protect themselves from enemy fire and artillery.

Second trench

This served as a reserve for the front line. It used to have refuges located at a depth exceeding 10m (33ft) to bear the direct impact of heavy artillery.



WWI Field Hospital

France, 1914-1918



he administration of medical aid on the front lines of war meant medics were a key division of all the armed services, but as WWI commenced this was still a

relatively new concept. With the new mechanised nature of the battle, the need to treat injuries and rotate in and out fit soldiers was more important than ever and field hospitals became a crucial tool along with the role of triage to sort patients.

Triage was first used by French doctor Dominique Jean Larrey during the Napoleonic Wars and so it was from the French that others learned this method of streamlining their medical response.

At first it was simply a case of sorting patients who could be saved from those who could not, but as WWI progressed a more sophisticated sorting pattern was introduced. The field hospital, often referred to as a Casualty Clearing Station, was where that decision was made and it was the place where nurses were closest to the front lines.

Thousands of nurses volunteered during WWI, often working in facilities that were within range of enemy artillery fire. The unhygienic conditions in the trenches made infection common, and getting wounded and sick soldiers to cleaner (although not necessarily entirely clean) tents further back from the front lines was paramount.

Nurses would ultimately manage the hour-to-hour and day-to-day care of patients in these field hospitals, administering medicine, dressing and redressing wounds and recording observations for doctors and surgeons to review on their rounds. They would also supervise meals and bathing, with this duty often falling to the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurses who assisted the trained nurses.

The main trained corps of military nurses for the British was the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS). It started the war with 300 nurses - by the end of the conflict they numbered over 10,000.

Cleanliness first

One of the primary challenges of a field hospital was maintaining as high a level of cleanliness as possible. For all the dangers of the front line of WWI, one of the biggest killers was infection and disease brought about by unclean water and a lack of washing facilities. It was often up to Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurses to maintain linens, cloths and instruments to the best of their ability.

Nurse response

The Casualty Clearing Station was the closest women could get to the front line working as nurses in WWI. Between the front line and the first field hospital would be a series of medics, stretcher carriers and (depending on the distance) ambulance drivers who would get soldiers to the clearing tents. Nurses also served in the medical facilities further back.

First line

The field hospital was just the beginning of the process for many patients. Those who needed further treatment would be transported via ambulance and eventually evacuation trains to more secure facilities further behind the lines, often put together inside towns because this guaranteed access to water and electricity that might not be available closer to the trenches.



Rough medicine

Modern medicine was still in its infancy as World War I began so the instruments and methods used in the challenging conditions were pretty brutal by modern standards. Amputations were common to avoid infections that would kill patients as easily as the initial injury would have. As such, saws and other blades were essential tools in a field hospital.

Shock treatment

Dealing with shock on the front lines was often one of the first forms of treatment that needed to be administered and, depending the cause, could be relatively simple in approach. A soldier's wet clothes would be removed and warm blankets provided, along with hot drinks and food. For shock from injuries, painkillers like morphine might be employed alongside bandages and splints. For more complex issues the patient needed to be sent up the line to other facilities.

Order amid chaos

The role of triage in dealing with medical emergencies really came to the fore during WWI. Casualties would be sorted into four different front-line tents like this one, depending on their needs. Most typically this would mean a tent each for wounds and gas, the sick, skin or venereal diseases, and convalescence. However the exact setup was left to each field hospital section to decide for themselves.

Painful choices

The front-line field hospitals used triage systems to organise soldiers depending on the nature of their need, and in the middle or after an offensive some really tough decisions needed to be made. Patients were sorted into three categories of those who would be fine without treatment, those whose condition would be improved by treatment and those who would not survive even with treatment. These life or death decisions were made over and over again at locations such as this.

Mobile unit

To respond to both the medical needs of the injured as well as the realities of a war that could see the front line change at any moment, Casualty Clearing Stations would most commonly be tent structures, capable of being packed up and moved quickly to a new location. This was paramount to treating soldiers as soon as possible.

Location, location, location

Finding the right place to put a field hospital depended on a number of factors. Distance from the front line was one, as treating wounds to prevent infection was a matter of urgency. Other considerations, however, were more basic, such as access to a clean water source and things like wood to burn in stoves to heat water and keep the tent warm.

Indian Army AT WAR

How the Indian Army's experiences on the bloody battlefields of the First World War helped pave the way for independence

Words Mark Simner



The British-Indian Army of 1914-18 was unlike most armies of the First World War. It was hugely diverse, including Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists,

Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and pagans. The official language of the Indian Army was Hindustani, but such a mix of peoples inevitably led to a myriad of languages spoken by its soldiers, such as Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Pushtu, Dari, Bengali, Tamil, Burmese and Nepali. It reflected the Indian Empire of the time, which included not only India but also modern-day Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan and Nepal.

Upon the outbreak of the First World War, the Indian Army comprised of 240,000

Indian troops, including combatants and non-combatants, and around 77,000 British. By the time the war ended, some 1.5 million Indians had served, of which over a million had been deployed overseas. Given its size it is remarkable the Indian Army was an entirely volunteer force, the Indian Government never introducing conscription (although it was briefly considered). Nevertheless, the number of men recruited in comparison to India's population of over 315 million (according to the 1911 Indian Census) was in fact tiny.

Most Indian troops in 1914 were excited to serve abroad, lured by desire to visit vilayet (foreign lands). However, many believed they were going to serve in relative safety in other

parts of the British Empire and would return home after a short time. In fact, they were about to be thrown into the bloody battles of the Western Front.

BAPTISM OF FIRE

Leading elements of Indian Expeditionary Force A, also referred to as the Indian Corps, made ready to depart India for France in August 1914. They arrived in Marseilles the following month to cries of 'Vive les Hindoues' and 'Les Hindoues' from jubilant French crowds. The Indian Corps initially consisted of British and Indian troops from the 3rd (Lahore) and the 7th (Meerut) Infantry Divisions, and the 9th (Secunderabad) Cavalry Brigade, as well as engineers and



The cold conditions presented another challenge for the Indian soldiers



Two soldiers enjoy a lighter moment during a break from the brutal trench warfare



artillery. Thus, the Indian Army was earmarked for overseas war service from the very start.

As had long been the tradition in the Indian Army, the senior officers of Indian regiments were British, while the VCOs (Viceroy's Commissioned Officers), NCOs and men were Indian. At the beginning of the war, the Indian soldiers were hampered by lack of equipment and their unfamiliarity with it. For example, the Indian Corps lacked effective artillery guns and were only issued with new MK III Lee Enfield rifles and Vickers Machine guns upon arrival in France. The Indian troops also suffered from the cold European weather, which they were unaccustomed to.

Their baptism of fire on the Western Front came during the battles of La Bassée, Messines and Armentières in October 1914. It would be during this period that the first Victoria Cross was awarded to an Indian soldier. The recipient was a Muslim sepoy (soldier) called Khudadad Khan, a machine gunner in the 129th Baluchis. His citation, published in the *London Gazette* on 7 December 1914, starkly read: "On 31st October, 1914, at Hollebeke, Belgium, the British Officer in charge of the detachment having been wounded, and the other gun put out of action by a shell, Sepoy Khudadad, though himself wounded, remained working his gun until all the other five men of the gun detachment had been killed."

Khudadad was not the only Indian soldier to receive the VC for acts of valour on the Western Front. In November, Naik (corporal) Darwan Singh Negi of the 39th Garhwal Rifles, although twice wounded, displayed "conspicuous bravery" during the Defence of Festubert. He received his



A wounded Indian soldier is taken away for treatment

"I should like to see the lances of the bengal lancers fluttering down the streets of berlin"

VICEROY LORD CURZON

VC on the same day as Khudadad. During one of the Indian Corps' other notable battles, the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, Sepoy Gabar Singh Negi received a posthumous VC for leading a bayonet party in a German trench, during which he was killed. His widow proudly wore his VC until her own death in 1981. The first Nepalese Gurkha to receive the award was Sepoy Kulbir Thapa of the 3rd Gorkha Rifles for his actions during the bloody Battle of Loos.

By the end of 1915, Indian soldiers had experienced some of the most bitter fighting on the Western Front. Casualties were heavy, standing at 8,000 dead or missing and 14,000 wounded. However, the decision had been taken to withdraw the Indian Corps from France following criticism of its performance. This unexpected departure from France caused one disappointed Indian subadar (captain) to remark: "We came to defeat the King's enemies. They are not yet defeated."

DEFEAT AND VICTORY IN MESOPOTAMIA

The largest deployment of Indian troops outside India during the First World War was in

Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq). Known as Indian Expeditionary Force D, it was involved in several successful early actions against Ottoman forces. However, in late November 1915 the 6th (Poona) Division, under the command of General Charles Townshend, sustained heavy casualties at the Battle of Ctesiphon while advancing on Baghdad. Having failed to break through the Ottoman positions, Townshend decided to withdraw to Kut Al Amara, where he became besieged.

The Siege of Kut lasted from early December 1915 to late April 1916. During the siege, Townshend ordered several assaults against the Ottoman forces, but none succeeded. Essential supplies soon began to run out and deadly disease spread rapidly among the Indian ranks. So bad did the situation become that, on 29 April, Townshend surrendered his force of 13,300, including 7,200 Indian combatants and 3,250 non-combatants. It has been estimated that nearly 70% of Townshend's soldiers died while in captivity due to mistreatment. One Austrian officer present described seeing an army of British and Indian skeletons being driven along by Turkish rifle butts like "a scene from Dante's *Inferno*".



Many Sikhs fought for the British against the Germans

Muslim members of the British Indian Army praying outside a mosque in Woking, Surrey



An Indian soldier uses a periscope to look at the German trenches



Sir Douglas Haig (second from right) introduces a British Indian Army officer to French general Joseph Joffre



Although Kut was a major defeat, a British-Indian force under General Frederick Stanley Maude retook the city in February 1917, then captured Baghdad the next month. Following the Battle of Sharqat in October 1918, Ottoman forces surrendered and agreed the Armistice of Mudros. The campaign in Mesopotamia had been largely fought by the Indian Army in challenging conditions while lacking supplies and adequate medical care. In all, British-Indian forces suffered over 85,000 killed, wounded and captured in Mesopotamia. Many more died of disease.

Indian troops also served in East Africa, Palestine and Gallipoli, and it's estimated that around 74,000 died during the First World War, with a further 69,200 wounded. Eleven Victoria Crosses were awarded to Indian soldiers, a testament to their courage and determination in battle. Their contribution to the British war effort was considerable.

HOPES FOR INDEPENDENCE

When war broke out in 1914 there was a wave of enthusiastic loyalty from many educated Indians who were eager to support Britain. Such support came as a surprise to the British authorities, but it was not for love of Britain and its empire. Rather, it was partly due to anti-German propaganda spread in the lead up to war and in part due to hopes India would be rewarded politically for its support. The elites of India also believed the presence of Indian troops fighting alongside their British counterparts would raise the status of Indians in the eyes of the British.

Even before the war ended, Indian nationalists were using India's considerable support for Britain and the loss of so many Indian lives in their argument for the reasonable transition to self-rule. Unsurprisingly, Britain didn't want to lose the jewel in the crown of its empire but the need for some form of recognition was clear. As such, the Government of India Act 1919 was passed, greatly increasing participation of Indians in governing the country. But for Indian nationalists this was simply not enough.

In the wake of the war, many Indian veterans returning to civilian life were no longer content being subordinate subjects of the British Empire. So it's unsurprising that this large pool of ex-soldiers became a prime recruitment ground for the Indian National Congress, which had come under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership in 1920. Demands for Indian Independence escalated and active measures such as Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement attracted increasing support.

With another war looming in the 1930s, opposition to the loss of more Indian lives for little tangible return led to renewed efforts for independence in the form of the Quit India Movement. It would ultimately take until 1947 for India to leave the British Empire and become independent, albeit suffering a tragic partition in the process as the region was split between India and Pakistan. Although dreams of independence long predate 1914, the origins of an independence movement that finally succeeded can be traced back to the First World War.



Gurkhas were renowned for their ferocity and courage on the battlefield



Gas victim

The chlorine gas used by the Germans at Ypres was denser than the atmosphere, meaning it quickly flooded the British trenches. The casualty rate inflicted by the gas was high, with many soldiers suffering painful deaths.

Not pressing the advantage

Despite successfully causing large amounts of damage to the Allied forces, the Germans were slow to press the advantage, so as a result didn't gain as much ground as they could have done.

War dead

Thanks in large part to the use of gas, the Second Battle of Ypres saw a high amount of casualties on both sides. The Allies saw over 70,000 lost, while the German total was around half that at 35,000.





The Second Battle of Ypres

Ypres, Belgium,
21 April - 25 May 1915



When recalling some of the hugely destructive trench-warfare battles of World War I, Ypres is one of the first names that comes to mind. While the First Battle of 1914 stands out due to the catastrophic death toll, the Second Battle retains historical significance for a different - but equally sinister - reason: it marked the first use of poison gas in battle on the Western Front.

The first instance of its use happened at the start of the Battle of Gravenstafel - the first of six smaller battles that collectively form the larger Second Battle of Ypres. After first shelling the French territorial and Algerian/Moroccan forces with howitzer fire, the German troops unleashed their 5,700 canisters' worth of chlorine gas, carried toward the Allies by the prevailing winds.

Its impact was instant and catastrophic. Of the 10,000 troops in its path, around 6,000 were dead within minutes. When combined with water, chlorine becomes acidic - in the process destroying the eyes and lungs. The surviving French troops scattered, leaving a seven-kilometre (4.3-mile)-wide gap for the Germans to advance through.

However, the German forces became victims of their own success. Not anticipating the effectiveness of gas, much of their reserves had been transferred west to the Russian front. Coupled with their weariness of possible Allied traps and the adverse effects of the still-lingering gas, they advanced slowly. Their reticence gave the Allied troops time to counter-attack, successfully driving the German troops back, but not without casualties.

Having seen the brutal efficiency of gas as a weapon, the Germans used it again - this time on 24 April at the Battle of St Julien against Canadian forces. Again, the losses were heavy, although despite being pushed back, the Canadian troops managed to hold on, having developed the method of holding urine-soaked rags to their faces in order to counteract the effects of the gas. British reinforcements arrived on 3 May, by which point the Allies had suffered around 1,000 fatalities.

After the Allied troops fell back closer to the town of Ypres - recognising that only a large-scale assault would push the Germans back, something they didn't at that time have the manpower to commit - the battle recommenced on 8 May. Although the Germans were able to occupy Frezenberg Ridge and continued to inflict devastating assaults on the Allied forces, they managed to hold the line.

A further assault at Bellewaarde on 24 May by the German forces (again by poison gas) forced the Allied troops to withdraw and retreat by about a kilometre (0.6 miles). Prevented from making further advances due to a lack of personnel and supplies, they instead resorted to bombing the town - by the battle's end, Ypres was little more than a pile of rubble.

The death tolls make for dire reading: the combined Allied forces experienced around 70,000 casualties; the Germans 35,000. Furthermore, the effectiveness of gas as a weapon had been brutally demonstrated. Although its use was widely condemned, the British adopted its use, putting it into effect at Loos later that year. Thus, the after-effects of one of the bloodiest battles of the war would continue to linger on.

Holding the line

Despite the devastating assaults levelled upon them by the German forces, the Allied troops managed to stay strong for the most part, staving off defeat, but losing some of the tactical advantage of high ground.



ALLIED ARMY

Troops Eight divisions
Casualties 70,000



GENERAL SIR HORACE SMITH-DORRIEN

Leader

On 6 May, Smith-Dorrien was relieved from duty by General French, replaced with Herbert Plumer.

Strengths Very organised and pragmatic decision-maker.

Weakness Poor relationship with commanding officer led to his ultimate dismissal.



ALLIED SOLDIER

Key unit

The Allied Army comprised British, French, Canadian and African forces, with soldiers from other Commonwealth countries.

Strengths Included the well-trained British Expeditionary Force.

Weakness Defending a vulnerable position; couldn't defend against gas.



HOWITZER

Key weapon

Faced with gas attacks and long-range artillery assaults, the British replied with fire of their own.

Strengths Long range and potentially devastating.

Weakness Found themselves in a tactically inferior position, which reduced effectiveness.

1 UNSUCCESSFUL GAS ATTACK

The German troops carry around 5,730 gas canisters - each weighing 41kg (90lb) - into battle by hand. They are opened and operated by hand, and rely on the wind direction directing the poisonous clouds toward the enemy combatants. This method of execution is far from foolproof, with a number of German troops managing to injure or kill themselves in the process. The first three attempts at dispersal are unsuccessful.

2 SUCCESSFUL GAS ATTACK

The Allied troops' luck doesn't hold. At about 5pm on 22 April, having been successfully unleashed by the German forces, a cloud of chlorine gas descends on a number of battalions, with the Algerian and French forces the worst affected. There are around 6,000 instant casualties, with the majority of the rest of them abandoning their positions in their desperation to get away from the gas.

3 GERMANS ADVANCE

The retreating Allied forces leave the way clear for the German forces to advance into the now-unoccupied territory, which they do at around 5.15pm. Moving 3-4km (1.9-2.5mi) into French territory, they capture Pilckem Ridge by the village of Pilckem, achieving their first objective of the battle.

4 GERMANS ESTABLISH BRIDGEHEADS

Many of the German reserves have been sent to fight on the Russian front, but they make use of what they have, with the 45th and 46th Reserve Divisions setting up bridgeheads by the Yser Canal at Steenstraat and Het Sas. They infiltrate a gap in the front line, with Ypres now exposed.

5 THE CANADIANS COUNTER-ATTACK

In danger of being exposed, the 13th Battalion of the 1st Canadian Division join up with some surviving French troops and launch a counter-attack on the left flank on the road between St Julien and Poelcappelle. In doing this, they successfully manage to halt the advance of the German 51st Reserve Division, preventing them from assisting with the main offensive.





6 LANGEMARCK CAPTURED

French soldiers occupying the village of Langemarck avoid the gas, but quickly find themselves overwhelmed by the German forces, who defeat them and capture the area.

7 FRENCH COUNTER-ATTACK HALTED

Six companies of the French 7th Battalion Zouaves make another counter-attack at about 8pm from Boesinghe, crossing the Yser Canal in the direction of Pilckem. They eventually come into contact with German forces, but despite several hours of fighting, little progress is made.

10 GERMANS SHELL YPRES

Germans bombard the town of Ypres with artillery fire, with their aim of making it harder for the Allies to bring in reinforcements. By the time they are done, Ypres has been heavily damaged.

9 GERMANS HALT ADVANCE

By around 8.30pm on 23 April, the German forces cease their assault. This is partly because they have already achieved one of their main objectives of capturing Pilckem Ridge - which is on high ground and thus a tactically advantageous spot - but also because they lack the manpower to sustain a continuous assault, despite having wreaked a high casualty rate on the Allied forces.

8 CANADIANS ATTACK AGAIN

After the failure of the French assault, the Canadian 3rd Infantry Brigade plan another assault for 11.30pm. This is later postponed, before commencing again in the early hours of 23 April.

GERMAN ARMY

Troops Seven divisions
Casualties 35,000



ALBRECHT, DUKE OF WÜRTTEMBERG

Leader

The head of the German house of Württemberg was a decorated army general during WWI.

Strengths Previous experience of victory at the Battle of the Ardennes earlier in WWI.

Weakness His overly cautious nature cost him further advances.



GERMAN SOLDIERS

Key unit

The German forces came prepared, ready to use a deadly new weapon that would alter the game.

Strengths Possessed the tactical advantage of high ground.

Weakness Lacking sufficient numbers to complete their objective and win the campaign.



CHLORINE GAS

Key weapon

The first time it was used in a large-scale offensive assault was in the protracted Second Battle of Ypres.

Strengths Devastatingly effective, difficult to defend against.

Weakness Dangerous to carry - wind blowing in the wrong direction can make it fatal to friendly forces.



Battle of Verdun

Verdun, Northern France 1916



On 12 July 1916 the fate of Verdun, France's ancient bastion, was all but secured. After nearly five months of hammering away at French positions, and inching closer to the citadel on the Meuse River, the German army was within reach of Verdun. There was only one last obstacle: Fort Souville.

This fort rested on the last imposing heights before Verdun. From there the Germans could easily swamp the ruined Fort Saint-Michel - standing modestly atop a hill just 344 metres

tall - and be in a position to assault Verdun directly. The artillery preparation began on 10 July at 12pm; the Germans would concentrate 330,000 shells on an area just 25 kilometres square. To this the French would add nearly 200,000 shells in counter-bombardments. More than 500,000 shells fell within 20 hours. The Germans threw Operation 'Croix Verte' into this din, with the launching of 63,000 artillery shells, filled with deadly phosgene gas, against French artillery positions.

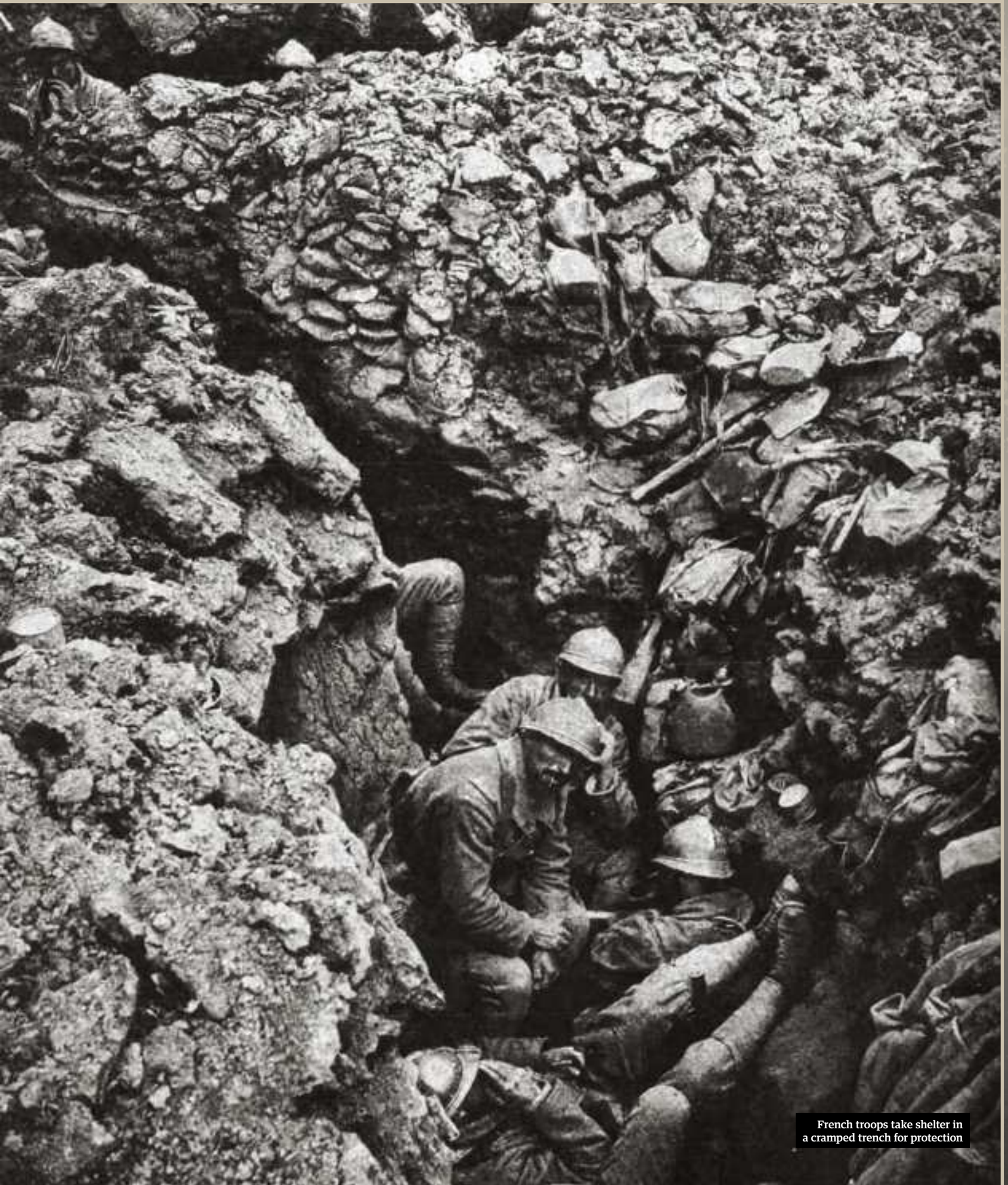
Sergeant Marc Boasson described the gas attack as: 'A gripping spectacle; little by little,

we saw the country disappear, the valley become filled with an ashy coloured smoke, clouds grow and climb, things turn sombre in this poisoned fluid. The odour of gas, slightly soapy, occasionally reached us despite the distance. And at the bottom of the cloud one heard the rumble of explosions, a dull noise like a muffled drum.'

The intensity of the bombardment and counter-bombardment was immense, and losses were heavy on both sides before the attack was even launched. The Bavarian Alpen, an elite formation tasked with assaulting



The skeletal corpse of a soldier lies unburied on the battlefield



French troops take shelter in a cramped trench for protection

Images: Alamy (trench), TopFoto (corpse)



Souville, suffered heavily. Its 140th Infantry Regiment was hit especially hard; the regiment's 2nd battalion had lost virtually all of its officers. The Bavarian Guard had lost seven of its eight trench mortars, plus 37 dead and 83 wounded before even going over the top. Other units in the regiment refused to advance.

Those elements of the Alpen Korps that fought on, did so through dense gas, and were met with intense French machine gun and artillery fire. Despite heavy losses they pressed on to within 500 metres of Fort Souville. The French, on their side, launched manic and poorly organised counterattacks to try to stem the tide. General Charles 'the butcher' Mangin sent men from the 114e RI (régiment d'infanterie) to

futile night attacks. Confused and disoriented they attacked in the wrong direction, and suffered heavy casualties. Such weak efforts had no hopes of success, and despite their losses, German troops stood ready to assault Fort Souville on the morning of 12 July. The fate of Verdun would be sealed on the glacis of Fort Souville shortly after 9am.

Without officers, hemmed in by intense artillery fire, a small remnant of the 140th IR (German infantry regiment) found themselves unable to withdraw and rejoin their comrades. Instead, they chose to advance, sending forward a section of just 30 men (Section Bayer of 2nd Company). Alone, they stormed up the glacis of Fort Souville at 9am on 12 July.

The defenders of the fort were hardly in a better position. Commanded by the 65-year-old Lieutenant-Colonel Astruc de Saint-Germain, the garrison had for days been sealed off by a curtain of fire and steel, hammered by German artillery, and deluged with poison gas. One company of reinforcements under Lieutenant Dupuy had been sent to pass through the German artillery barrage separating the fort from the rest of the French army; only 60 men survived to reach the fort. It was these same men that defended the glacis from the haggard assault of Section Bayer.

These 90 French and German soldiers, worn and weathered, would decide the fate of Verdun. Section Bayer attacked and was met with Dupuy's



machine guns; their rapid chatter silenced the German assault. Fort Souville, and so Verdun, was safe. After 12 July the Germans would have no hope of capturing that grand objective.

By now the Battle of the Somme was well and truly raging, pulling German attention, men and materiel northwards. Yet, the Verdun battle ground on for another five months. It had taken on a life of its own, living on only by some internal logic, which compelled the French to launch a series of costly counterattacks to regain the ground lost since February that same year. The great events of history are so often larger than the men and women who populate and perpetuate them - they seemingly have willpower unto themselves. This article explores

the life, nature and impact of this, the longest battle of World War I: Verdun.

21-23 FEBRUARY

The battle of Verdun began on 21 February 1916, after many weeks of preparation through harsh winter conditions. To begin, the Germans unleashed a dense artillery bombardment on French positions in the sector. Even though many French soldiers had expected the attack, the sheer weight of fire was overwhelming.

The Germans under Crown Prince Wilhelm, the son of Kaiser Wilhelm, had managed to sneak an additional 160 batteries of heavy and super-heavy guns into the sector without the French noticing. This was roughly half as many heavy guns as the entire French army, 2.6 million strong, had marched to war with just 18 months prior.

The initial German bombardment was awe-inspiring. French aviators couldn't place the enemy batteries in this din; too many were firing too rapidly from all directions. Most of this bombardment was focused on the triangle Brabant-Ornes-Verdun. Against a front of roughly 40 kilometres, the Germans launched 1 million shells, many of them filled with lachrymatory or poison gas. The fire was so thick that French runners couldn't penetrate it, isolating forward French positions and breaking their systems for command and control.

This initial bombardment lasted for nine hours, from 7am to 4pm. Then, the attack went in. French defenders braced themselves for the expected hordes of German forces to come swarming across No Man's Land; the Germans, however, had a different idea.

Instead of launching the sort of 'massed' attack that had become the norm on the Western Front, they surreptitiously sent small packets of men across No Man's Land - in some areas a vast 800 metres wide - to gently probe and prick the French line, testing for any weaknesses. The Germans seemed to be practicing the sort of warfare that officers like Philippe Pétain had been advocating for the French troops: the artillery conquers, the infantry occupies.

At the bois (wood) d'Haumont the German attack, launched by a reserve Jäger battalion, consisted of just one adjutant and 53 men. These men were followed by a second wave 150 metres behind them consisting of one adjutant, 36 men and two flamethrowers. The third wave, also 150 metres back, consisted of a further 45 men. The Germans had expected the bombardment to kill or incapacitate French defenders, allowing these small teams to effectively take their objectives unopposed.

Of course, some French defenders did survive. At several places the survivors were chasseurs à pied,

THE RISE OF PETAIN

The saviour of Verdun, a caring commander yet a strict disciplinarian, a Marshal of France, a commander-in-chief and later Nazi collaborator

Philippe Pétain has a complicated history and occupies a bizarre place in historical memory. He is simultaneously the man who saved Verdun, and also the President of Vichy France who collaborated with the Nazi regime. A position he won in part because of the reputation he won in World War I.

In WWI he is known for his tactical caution, and his desire to preserve the lives of his men above all other considerations. This made him hugely popular, and made him the obvious choice to succeed Nivelle during the French mutinies of 1917. At Verdun he did what he had always done: he insisted on a careful, scientific prosecution of the war. Pétain paid detailed attention to tactical minutia, especially the deployment of artillery. He completely reorganised the French counter-barrage system, which broke up German attacks, and the logistical structure of French forces during the battle. Pétain was also a long-time advocate for the better use of aerial reconnaissance.

Stern, curt, bitterly sarcastic, and yet deeply warm-hearted. He inspired intense devotion from his soldiers, and cared for them immensely



Images: Alamy (Fort Vaux), Getty Images (Pétain)

A German soldier takes up a position next to a corpse, thought to be French, near Fort Vaux

VERDUN BATTLE MAP

Verdun was fought in a salient, presenting enormous logistical challenges

1 OPENING ASSAULT

The opening phase of the German Operation Gericht (sometimes translated as Operation 'judgement' or 'execution site'). The German III, V and XVIII Corps attacked French positions on the eastern bank of the Meuse. They advanced in small packets, often assisted by specialised assault teams armed with flamethrowers. Assault tactics - what might later be called 'stormtroop tactics' - were becoming more advanced by this stage of the war with both the French and Germans doing more to specialise the roles played by their infantry units.

2 BOIS DES CAURES

The bois des Caures was one of a series of wooded areas that provided stiffer-than-expected resistance to the initial German assault. Wooded areas remained some of the most feared along the Western Front. They provided excellent cover for defenders, especially from artillery. Wooded areas could also be used to funnel attackers into pre-determined fields of fire where over-lapping machine gun posts would cut down attackers with enfilade fire. Emile Driant, parliamentarian and prolific author, died here commanding the 56th and 59th battalions of chasseurs à pied.

3 BRABANT AND SAMOGNEUX

The weight of the initial German assault fell further to the east of France, towards Haumont and Ornes. Nevertheless, the region around Brabant and Samogneux was critical. If the French fell apart here, their position on the right bank would become isolated, and potentially even encircled. The French forces with the river at their backs had no good avenue of escape, which greatly increased the likelihood that a minor defeat could turn into an ignominious rout.



4 RETAKING DOUAUMONT AND VAUX

In October, General Nivelle launched the first of two counteroffensives designed to recapture lost ground and take advantage of the severe mauling German troops had suffered on the Somme since July. The French fired off a huge number of shells (over 800,000) in their preliminary bombardment. This sort of shell expenditure would die off in 1917 as it was simply too costly. In the end, both Douaumont and Vaux were taken easily. The Germans had in part abandoned the area before the attack went in, perhaps a foreshadowing of the Nivelle Offensive.



5 MORT-HOMME

After making substantial progress on the right bank in February, the German attack shifted towards the left bank in March. Normally, a salient would confer certain advantages to the defenders here, namely the advantage of interior lines. The geography (namely the river), however, actually put the French at a disadvantage when trying to fend off German attacks from multiple directions. French losses around Mort-Homme and Hill 304 were heavy.

6 FORT SOUVILLE

One of the 19 forts which made up the Fortified Region of Verdun, Fort Souville, wound up having an unexpected importance in July 1916. Despite the Battle of the Somme having begun on 1 July, some German units were still pressing forward in the Verdun sector. Had Souville fallen, it may have encouraged them to keep pushing, threatening to force the French defenders on the right bank of the Meuse into the river.

7 THE VOIE SACRÉE

World War I was an industrial war, and required industrial quantities of materiel. Not just shells, but food, water, corrugated iron, sandbags, and reinforcements needed to arrive in a very timely fashion, and en masse, at the front when needed. Because of the layout of the battlefield the French had to move this great mass of manpower and materiel up a narrow road and rail-line coming up from Bar-le-Duc. This 'Sacred Way' was the only French lifeline for the majority of the battle.

8 FINAL DECEMBER OFFENSIVE

The last offensive of the battle of Verdun would again be led by General Mangin. Launched in the direction of Ornes, it recaptured a reasonable chunk of the ground lost to the Germans ten months earlier in the frantic days of late-February. The French fired over a million shells, inundating the area. Combined with the tired state of German forces by December 1916 this all but guaranteed a relatively easy French victory. The sheer number of German prisoners caught (roughly 11,000) is testament to the state of German forces in Verdun.

elite infantry. Despite suffering heavy losses in the opening bombardment - often two thirds of the unit would have been lost before the German infantry even came into sight - their training and morale made them hold on and do everything in their power to slow up the German advance. This vicious defence meant that, despite the overwhelming bombardment on 21 February, the French managed to only lose the bois d'Haumont, and the first positions in the bois des Caures, bois le Comte, bois de Ville, and at L'Herbebois.

In the centre of the line, Colonel Emile Driant's own battalion of chasseurs à pied held on tenaciously in the bois des Caures. By nightfall on 22 February his battalion consisted of just 94 men, down from a theoretical full strength of over 750 rifles. Driant himself was killed on 22 February while evacuating his command post, which had been zeroed by German 77mm guns. Without the brave resilience of Driant and his chasseurs, the Germans would have poured right through the centre of the line.

The situation continued to deteriorate badly as the battle progressed. French artillery was pulled back, the village of Brabant was completely given up without a fight, and the 72e DI (infantry division) that was defending it pulled back towards Samogneux.

Morale began to sink so low that one senior officer in the 72e DI (Lieutenant Colonel Bernard) ordered a detachment of machine guns to be held in reserve at Samogneux to enforce, "the obedience of those who might forget their duty".



Lieutenant Colonel Émile Driant saw the strategic value of Verdun and was against the removal of arms and men from the positions and forts in 1915

The retreat from Brabant infuriated senior commanders. General Chrétien, commanding XXX CA, ordered the 72e DI to retake the village, having been told by his superior, General Fernand de Langle de Cary, commander of the Centre Army Group, that no parcel of land was to be voluntarily given up. Instead, land was to be defended, "At any price... cost what it may." This is exactly what Falkenhayn was hoping for.

VERDUN UNDER PÉTAIN

Joseph Joffre, commander-in-chief of the French army, understood the seriousness of the situation and scrambled to keep Verdun from turning into a rout. The Germans continued to advance on the right bank of the Meuse, threatening to cut off French forces and roll up the flank of Verdun. Into this mess he hurled the Second Army, who had been in reserve, resting after its hard fight in Champagne a few months earlier.

Late on 24 February, Joffre called Second Army headquarters at Noailles and asked Pétain to come to his headquarters, GQG, at Chantilly. Pétain, however, was nowhere to be found. With his staff panicking, Pétain's long-time aide-de-camp, Serrigny, jumped into a staff car and raced off to Paris; he arrived at the Hôtel Terminus at the Gare du Nord Station at 3am. After arguing his way past the hotel manager, he eventually found himself outside of a hotel room staring at Pétain's boots resting in the hallway next to a pair of women's slippers. When Serrigny knocked on the door, Pétain answered, wearing "the scantiest of costumes", to learn that his army was being sent to Verdun. They were due to have an 8am meeting with Joffre, so once he

"Without the brave resilience of Driant and his chasseurs, the Germans would have poured right through the centre of the line"



The land around Fort Douaumont and Verdun was devastated by the battle



THE WAR ABOVE THE RFV

"We cannot hit what we cannot see" – paraphrase of General Emile Fayolle, 1915

Air power was a critical component of World War I. Above all else it was an extension of the artillery, the most important arm in the war. Before the Great War terrestrial observation usually provided enough information to prepare basic artillery bombardments and barrages. The sheer mass and depth of the fighting on the Western Front made this impractical.

The problems of coordinating mass artillery fire were compounded by the geographic advantages that the Germans maintained throughout the World War I. After the Battle of the Marne, the Germans had the luxury of retreating back to a defensive line running along just about every significant piece of high ground in northeastern France and Flanders. Air power became the only means for the Entente powers to actually see what they were firing at on the ground.

During Verdun it was essential for both sides. A mixture of fixed observation balloons and heavier-than-air platforms provided the detailed intelligence required to orchestrate the vast and complex artillery preparations both sides pursued in 1916. Pétain had long been interested in the utility of air power. As far back as spring 1915, he argued in

favour of a perpetual mapping of the enemy's lines through aerial reconnaissance. He dreamed of a vast, coordinated map of the enemy trenches so as to quickly respond to any enemy movements or artillery action. Essentially, he was inventing a system that would not come into fruition until the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the advent of 'kill-boxes'!

Adding a third dimension to the battlefield changed warfare forever

"Air power became the only means for the Entente powers to actually see what they were firing at"



The wreckage of a downed German bi-plane

had explained the situation, Serrigny got himself a room to sleep.

Pétain took command of the Verdun sector on 26 February at midnight and within hours he learned of the loss of Fort Douaumont. A small detachment of German troops had taken the fort by surprise without suffering any losses. The details of this loss were hidden from the public, who were instead told of a brave defence against insurmountable odds.

Undaunted, Pétain set about trying to repair the crumbling situation and paid especial attention to improving French logistics. Because Verdun was a salient, the French only had one real route into and out of the battlefield. This consisted of one light rail line and one road up from Bar-le-Duc, and made up the so-called Voie Sacrée, the 'Sacred Way', along which all of the men and materiel would have to travel. Before long, Pétain had the logistical network strengthened and running like clockwork. Over 4,000 lorries and ambulances would make a total of over 6,000 journeys up the Voie Sacrée each day. Vehicles traversed roughly a million miles each week transporting 90,000 men and 50,000 tonnes of supplies; at the height of the battle a lorry passed along the road every 14 seconds. It was a modern, automated, industrial system unlike any other at the time.

Combined with this logistical network, Pétain created what he called his 'Noria' system, which envisioned the Verdun battle and its logistical network as a great water wheel constantly taking water out of the battle and putting fresh resources in. Pétain made sure that men never had to spend more than a few days at the front. If they attacked, or were attacked, units would be immediately pulled out to rest. The general understood how crucially important it was to maintain the quality of his fighting divisions by not letting them be ground into dust.

The Germans, on the other hand, tended to leave units at the front for weeks at a time. The units lost their experienced soldiers and NCOs, making it more difficult for them to successfully integrate replacements. The heavy losses incurred also pushed morale to near the breaking point. Ironically, Pétain proved a much better attritional warrior than the Germans who started the battle with an expressly attritional model.

Pétain's reforms and refinements were important in shoring up the logistical and morale problems facing the French, but alone they could not do much to stem the tide of German forces consistently making ground against ever-weaker French defenders. By 24 February, the French were down to just 86 heavy guns in the Verdun sector. The infantry was disorganised when Pétain arrived and all but incapable of defending themselves. The only thing that saved them in those critical early days was the German need to move their artillery forward, reorganise the trenches they had already conquered, and extend their lines of supply. Simple



A French soldier lies partially buried in the soil, a casualty of the tactics to 'bleed France white'



A painting depicting French infantry recapturing Fort Douaumont in October 1916

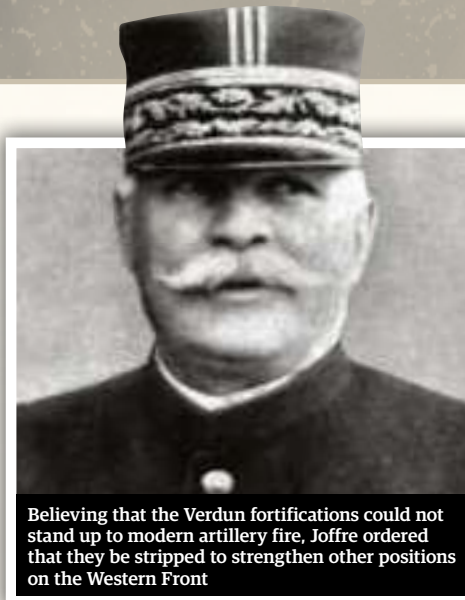


Clausewitzian friction saved the French in the opening phase of the battle.

By the end of February the battle on the right (east) bank of the Meuse had slowed to a crawl, leading the Germans to change their axis of attack and begin striking French positions on the left bank. On 2 March, the Germans opened up with a stunning bombardment to rival that unleashed on 21 February. The first major infantry attack on the left (west) bank went in on 6 March, supported by fire from a German armoured train - their goal was the position of Mort-Homme.

The French responded with a furious counter-barrage, which should have substantially broken up the cohesion of the German attack and given French defenders a chance to hold on. In this instance over 10,000 French shells fell into marshy land and failed to detonate, allowing the Germans to advance, maintaining their strength.

The commander of the sector General Georges de Bazelaire responded by ordering every French unit to immediately retreat upon being attacked, regardless of the circumstances. At that point, maintaining morale and manpower was the only thing that mattered: the ground was already lost. Nevertheless, the 67e DI managed to lose 3,000 men over the course of 6-7 March. Because the French were now more prepared for German attacks, they were able to launch a counterattack the following day. At 7am, two battalions under



Believing that the Verdun fortifications could not stand up to modern artillery fire, Joffre ordered that they be stripped to strengthen other positions on the Western Front

Colonel Macker of the 92e RI attacked and retook two-thirds of the ground lost the previous day in and around the bois des Corbeaux in 20 minutes. Colonel Macker had run out of water by this point, and so led the attack with a flask of cheap wine, his cane in his hand, and a cigar in his mouth: the epitome of a French officer of World War I.

All the while Pétain grew increasingly worried that his battered position would break, and urged Joffre to launch the Somme battle as soon as possible. Beginning to get worried himself, Joffre visited the Verdun front on 10 April 1916, the

same day that Pétain issued his famous order: 'Courage. On les aura!' ('We'll get 'em!'). Joffre had grown weary of Pétain's incessant requests of resupply and reinforcement and hoped to reignite an offensive spirit in the general.

It was during this trip that Joffre first saw General Robert Nivelle - the man who would succeed him as commander-in-chief - lead men in combat. Nivelle was wedded to the attack, and maintained a vigorous posture whenever possible. Even though his attacks were costly, and won no real strategic advantage, they caught Joffre's eye. Soon after this visit Joffre promoted Pétain, making him commander of the Centre Army Group, and promoted Nivelle to the head of Pétain's Second Army. This gave him tactical control of the battle from 26 April until its end in December. Pétain's critical leadership of the Battle of Verdun had lasted only two months.

As the months passed, the battle carried on along similar lines: attack and counterattack, with small areas of ground exchanging hands repeatedly, but on the whole tending to fall more and more into German possession.

The Germans crept closer to Verdun, eating up French manpower by the thousands. The strategic reserve that Joffre had hoped to use in a Franco-British attack astride the Somme river was chewed up in the Meuse Mill. Whereas Joffre and Foch's initial plan called for 40 French divisions



German troops pick their way past the fallen enemy. By the spring of 1916 the German advance was grinding to a halt

"Colonel Macker had run out of water by this point, and so led the attack with a flask of cheap wine, his cane in his hand, and a cigar in his mouth"

to attack alongside the British on the Somme, the losses suffered at Verdun would mean that only 12 would go over the top on 1 July 1916.

Despite the small numbers, they managed to capture all of their objectives at the cost of only 1,560 casualties, a rather different experience compared to the well-known debacle of the British on the same day.

THE COUNTERATTACKS

German pressure ebbed and flowed in the Verdun sector until July. Within a fortnight of the Somme offensive beginning, German attacks all but ceased. Whatever reserves the Germans had in the area were quickly shuttled north to protect and defend themselves against the French and British attacks in Picardy. Even before then, Nivelle had launched a series of counterattacks against the German army. In late-May he ordered General Mangin to recapture Fort Douaumont.

Despite Mangin's blind confidence in his ability to retake the fort - and despite excellent French efforts to assert control of the air, with six of the eight German observation balloons taken out - the attack was a disaster. The artillery preparation had been cut from five days to a little over two to save artillery shells for the Somme. The intense German counter-bombardment meant that French units were severely depleted before they even went over the top. Some of the lead companies - the 129e RI, for example - were down to only 45 men. On 22 May, at 11.50am, the attack went in anyway. By 12pm it had utterly failed.

Under Nivelle the French would eventually retake both forts Vaux and Douaumont, the latter on 24 October 1916. This was hugely important for French morale and helped capstone the French army's long and arduous trial along the banks of the Meuse.

In strictly military terms, however, Douaumont's recapture was probably not terribly important. The Germans had already been pulling out of the sector - Vaux was recaptured without a fight - and the battle had long before descended into a series of brief, isolated engagements followed by long, albeit highly uncertain and tense, periods of quiet. After the failure to capture Fort Souville in July, the Germans did not make any more serious offensives in the sector to reclaim or progress their previous advances.

The French counteroffensives largely occurred in late-October and early-November with a brief flare-up in the middle of December. Long gone were the hectic days of February to July, but nevertheless, this final phase is just as important as what had come before.

Despite capturing only a few objectives of dubious military value, and at a high cost in casualties and munitions, Nivelle's recasting of Verdun as an offensive, rather than defensive, battle won him substantial praise.

Ultimately, it paved the way for his succession of Joffre as command-in-chief in December 1916. The path then would lead inexorably to the disastrous Nivelle Offensive of April 1917 and the French mutinies that followed. It was a final dark reminder of the burden borne by French soldiers along the banks of the Meuse in 1916.

COUNTING THE COST

French and German losses were nearly identical at Verdun. So, who won?

During the Battle of Verdun, both the French and German armies lost around 350,000 casualties each, with the exact numbers still in contention. These figures sound shocking, but in reality it was only half as bad as the Somme, which saw roughly 600,000 casualties on either side. So, why does Verdun stick in our minds?

In part, this is owing to the horrific conditions in the Verdun salient, which were really archetypal for World War I: a true moonscape, complete with mud, blood, the dead and the dying. The sense of endless carnage for no real strategic gain (or loss) stuck in the minds of

soldiers very early on. It was here at Verdun that French soldiers were first heard bleating like sheep being led to the slaughter as they marched towards the sound of the guns. Pétain's 'Noria' system helped to reduce the stress and strain that his men experienced while operating in the Verdun sector.

Ultimately, there was only so much he could do to lessen the stress of suffering heavy casualties often in very short periods of time. On occasion, some units were being all but wiped out in a matter of days. What did these 700,000 Verdun casualties mean? Following the battle, the Allies

launched major attacks on the Somme, in Galicia (the Brusilov Offensive) and in Italy. On the Western Front alone Germany had fewer than 1.2 million casualties (nearly as many as they had lost in 1914 and 1915 combined). In the second half of 1916 the Germans lost 26 per cent of their forces on the Western Front, and a further 15 per cent of the forces they had on the Eastern Front. The losses were staggering. In the brutal game of attrition, Germany was simply outnumbered and could not afford to lose simply equal numbers of men in battles against the powers of Britain, France and Russia.



Cemetery to the fallen located at Douaumont. It contains 16,142 graves of known combatants

Battle of Jutland

31 May 1916

After years of building up battleships to dominate the oceans, the British and German navies finally came to blows in the North Sea











In early 1916, the North Sea was far from the battleground it would become, as the Royal Navy continued its blockade of the Imperial German Navy.

Admiral Reinhardt von Scheer's appointment that year changed things as he ordered his ships to break out against the British barricade. Across the water, the British had grown tired of months spent skirmishing with German vessels, and were already mobilising in response. The Royal Navy's Grand Fleet would finally face off against the German High Seas Fleet, as the results of the long arms race finally came to fruition.

"The British grew tired of month skirmishing with German vessels and mobilised a response"

THE NAVIES OF JUTLAND

The strength of the two navies at WWI's defining sea conflict

		British grand fleet	German high seas fleet
Dreadnoughts		28	16
Pre-Dreadnoughts		0	6
Battle Cruisers		9	5
Light Cruisers		26	11
Destroyers		77	61
Armoured Cruisers		8	0
Seaplane Carriers		1	0
Minelayers		1	0

JUTLAND: THE AFTERMATH

How the end of the arms race produced bittersweet victory

For two very proud nations, the loss of ships was hard to take. Although no dreadnoughts were sunk, many destroyers and battle cruisers were lost by both navies, with Britain recording more casualties of the two. Despite losing more vessels and manpower, the German retreat meant the Royal Navy now had undisputed control of the North Sea, but the lack of a stunning victory was not lost on the British public, who were expecting a success of at least Trafalgar proportions. The inconclusive result of the battle was disappointing to the military hierarchy as well, as it was hoped that these

metal leviathans could turn the tide of the war in their favour.

Admiral Jellicoe was criticised by Churchill for not taking a riskier approach. It is true that if he hadn't feared a torpedo attack, he could have knocked the German Navy out of the war at Jutland. However, this takes away from the key manoeuvres and tactics that Jellicoe exercised prior to this moment. So soon after one of the largest arms races of all time, the role of battleships had changed and the age of the submarines and aircraft carriers was about to begin.

While no dreadnoughts were lost, three British battle cruisers and eight destroyers were sunk by the Germans at Jutland

1 Run to the South

The British Grand Fleet steams eastwards to engage the German High Seas Fleet. Leaving their base in the Orkney Islands, battle cruisers led by Admiral David Beatty go ahead of the main fleet, ready to seek out the Germans first. Visual contact is made and, after being lured in by Franz von Hipper's smaller force, the ships sail further south. The Germans now hold the upper hand as Beatty's small force goes headlong into Scheer's main fleet.

2 Critical early blows

The first shots are fired by the Germans at 3.38pm; the Lion, Princess Royal and Tiger are all struck badly. The Royal Navy responds, shelling the Von der Tann and the Moltke. The first major vessel to sink is the British battle cruiser Indefatigable as it loses all but two of its crew. Chester is ambushed by German light cruisers but is saved by a timely intervention from the 3rd Battlecruiser Squadron.

3 Run to the North

Beatty turns back to join up with the main British force that looms into view through the haze. Hipper orders his fleet to sail north as Admiral John Jellicoe's main battle fleet enters the fray. Jellicoe heads south, cutting the Germans off before they are aware of the British trap. As the fleets clash, the Lutzow is sunk and the Seydlitz and Derfflinger are badly damaged as the loss of the Indefatigable is avenged.

4 Attempted breakout

Queen Mary and the Invincible are both taken down, however, the British Grand Fleet is now much more compact and in a better position to assault the thinly spread German line. To escape the oncoming bombardment, Scheer tries to pass Jellicoe and make a getaway out into the Baltic. This fails, as the British fleet anticipates the move and deals 27 heavy hits to the German fleet - a full retreat is ordered.

5 Tactical retreat

An expert manoeuvre by Scheer ensures the lighter ships in the fleet cover the withdrawal of the Imperial German Navy's best vessels, which are now out of range of the Royal Navy's guns. As deteriorating light makes combat difficult, the battle begins to wind down.

6 An unsatisfactory end

Scheer turns back to face the British once again, but the threat of a submarine attack dissuades Jellicoe from finishing the Germans off. Through the night there are small skirmishes between light cruisers and destroyers. Jutland ends inconclusively as both navies return to their home ports of Wilhelmshaven and Scapa Flow.



HMS Dreadnought

The dominant battleship of its era, this new vessel revived the naval arms race that intensified Anglo-German tensions in the lead up to World War I

HMS DREADNOUGHT

Crew members 773

Length 527ft (160.6m)

Beam 82ft (25m)

Draught 26ft (7.9m)

Displacement 18,420 tons

Top Surface speed 21 kts
(39 km/h)

Range 6,620 nautical miles
(12,260 km)

Modern optical rangefinders

HMS Dreadnought was the most accurate battleship of its time in determining distance. It was fitted with an electrical rangefinder developed exclusively by Barr and Stroud, two physics and engineering professors at the Yorkshire College (now the University of Leeds).

Constructed in
366 days

Pounder guns

Dreadnought's pounder guns acted as a form of defence against torpedo boats. Placed either at the top of the turrets or on the side of the ship, these 76mm guns had a range of 5.3 miles.

Dumaresq
mechanical
computer

Transmitting station

A new Vickers Range Clock was used on board HMS Dreadnought for continuously calculating the changing range between the target vessel and an enemy ship. Corrections could be made to update the clock at any time, so the ship was always one step ahead.

Strategic man power

Reversing a trend set in stone for centuries, HMS Dreadnought housed its officers and enlisted men forward, much closer to the bridge, in an effort to ensure that everybody on board was as close to their action stations as possible.

Krupp cemented armour

Krupp armour, which carbonised steel for greater hardness, was replaced at the turn of the 20th century by Krupp cemented armour and used to make Dreadnought. Its revolutionary composition promoted greater elasticity, reducing the chances of cracking.

Reduced
waterline belt

Quicker than the rest

HMS Dreadnought was the first ship to use an experimental steam turbine engine rather than the triple-expansion engine. At the time, it was the quickest ship ever, reaching a speed of 21 knots (39 kilometres per hour) despite its extra, weighty firepower.

"HMS Dreadnought was the first truly modern warship, combining a revolutionary armament supply, an electronic range finding weapons system and advanced speed technology"

Three central turrets for weight stabilization

Torpedo control tower

Attacking firepower

Dreadnought was the world's most feared battleship because of its astonishing firepower. It was built to shine in combat situations thanks to its five 12-inch twin-gun turrets that had a range of up to 14.2 miles.

Superior fire control

All 12-inch guns on board had identical ballistic characteristics, which simplified the task of adjusting fire in battle. This was previously not possible because guns of a different calibre created different splashes and observers would not be able to guide effectively.

23,000 shaft horse power

Fire doors

A major improvement on what came before it, HMS Dreadnought removed longitudinal passageways between compartments below deck. Taking cues from submarines, the ship's connecting doors were to be kept shut to prevent the spread of fire and flooding.

Fuel supply

At full capacity, Dreadnought could steam for 6,620 nautical miles (12,260 kilometres) at ten knots (19 kilometres per hour). It carried 2,914 tons of coal and 1,140 tons of fuel oil that was sprayed on to increase its burn rate.

HMS DREADNOUGHT'S PLACE IN HISTORY

As the figurehead of the Royal Navy, HMS Dreadnought kick-started a new era of ship development. Although it wasn't the first 'big-gun' ship in production - that honour is bestowed on Imperial Japan, who unsuccessfully attempted to build the IJN Satsuma in 1904 - its design sent shock waves across the naval world. Built in direct response to German efforts to challenge British supremacy on the sea, HMS Dreadnought was the first truly modern warship, combining a revolutionary armament supply, an electronic rangefinding weapons system and advanced speed technology. Its iconic status is secured despite never sinking another battleship.

ROYAL NAVY ^{VS} IMPERIAL GERMAN NAVY

The two greatest naval powers of the era were both determined to come out on top in the battle on the high seas

THE ROYAL NAVY

SHIPS

Germany may have been the plucky underdog, but the British Grand Fleet always had its nose ahead throughout the arms race, both in quality and quantity of ships.

LEADERS

Richard Burdon Haldane was one of the major players in the British war effort but failed to improve relations with the Germans, regularly losing out to Tirpitz in deals and pacts.

MANPOWER

Some accounts suggest that British sailors had the initiative trained out of them, but the years of Britannia ruling the waves resulted in legions of experienced sailors.

PORTS

A rich naval heritage meant that Britain had numerous ports at its disposal, from Liverpool and Portsmouth in England to Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands.

ALLIES

The French and the Russian navies were vital in the war effort in the Mediterranean and the Baltic respectively. The US entered too late to have any decisive naval contributions.

TOTAL



THE BEGINNING OF THE END FOR PAX BRITANNICA

By the tail-end of the 19th century, Britain was the most technologically advanced nation on Earth. However, the empire was becoming more and more of a financial and military burden, with British forces thinly spread over its borders. What Britain still had was a strong navy. Wary of unified Germany's new-found industrial might, naval funding was increased and the drive to stay on top was at hand. With huge backing from the British public, the harbour furnaces were lit and the road to a new naval supremacy began.

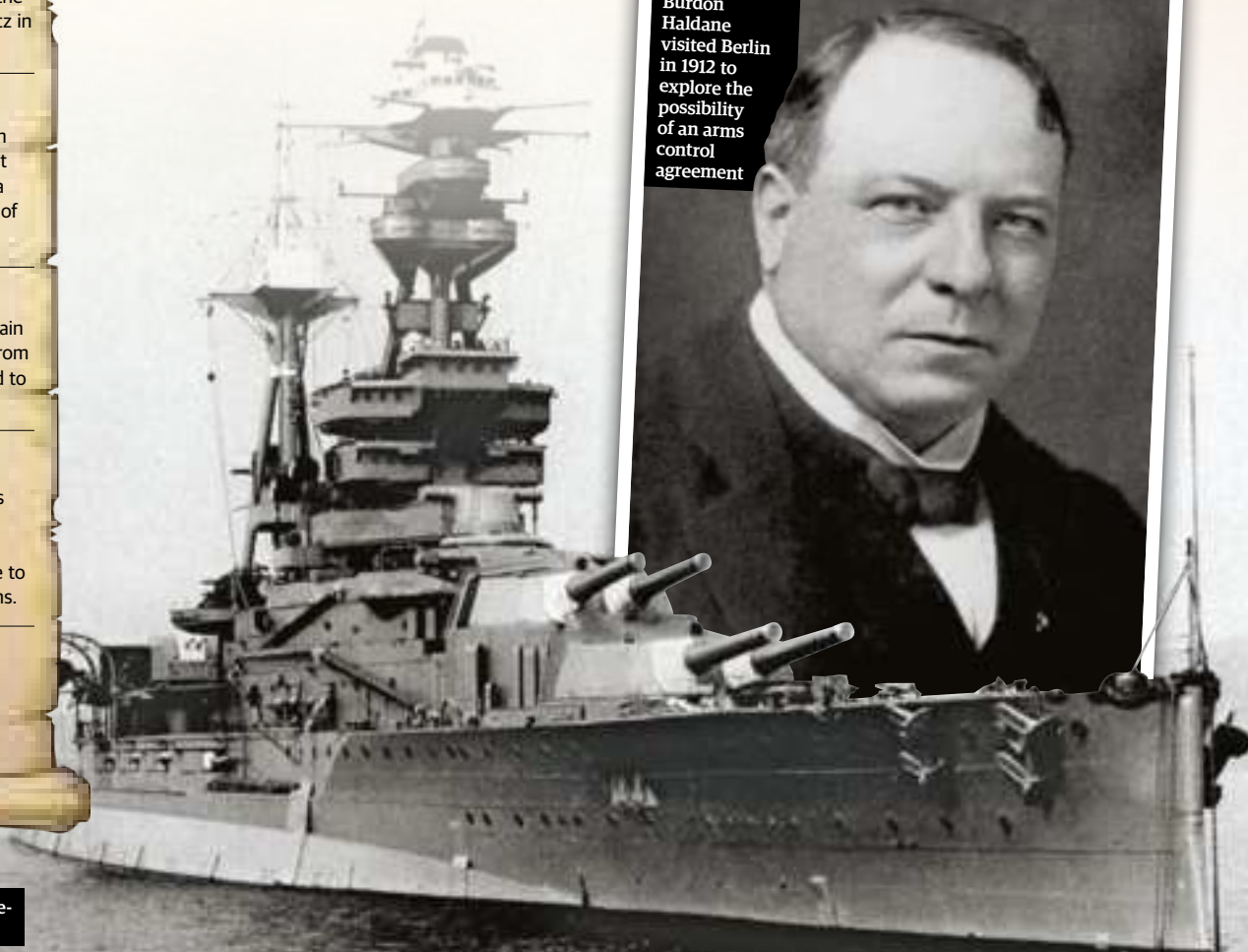


Battleships line up for the 1909 King's Review of the Home Fleet and the Atlantic Fleet at Spithead

As secretary of war, Richard Burdon Haldane visited Berlin in 1912 to explore the possibility of an arms control agreement



HMS Royal Oak, one of five Revenge-class battleships built during WWI





This 1913 oil painting depicted Kaiser Wilhelm as Grand Admiral

FROM REALPOLITIK TO WELTPOLITIK

Paranoid by a fear of encirclement and driven by a desire to compete with the world's elite nations, Germany was hungry for more military power. The era of Bismarck was over and Kaiser Wilhelm began to pioneer the idea of Weltpolitik, believing that an all-powerful High Seas Fleet would be the best way to realise his grand imperial ambitions. Germany was a young nation, barely 50 years old, and these assertive aspirations would send shock waves through Britain, Russia and France, who were compelled to respond.

Bernhard von Bülow was Chancellor of Germany from 1900 to 1909



THE IMPERIAL GERMAN NAVY

SHIPS

Despite Germany's best efforts, Britain's geographical location meant that it could always delegate more of its resources to naval production, which was imperative to its survival as a military power.

PORTS

Although Germany had large harbours, the likes of Kiel, Hamburg and Wilhelmshaven could not compete with the sheer number of ports that Britain had access to.

LEADERS

In the Anglo-German rivalry, Germany held all the cards and the likes of Tirpitz and Bülow continuously prevented British efforts to reduce the size of the German fleet.

ALLIES

Germany's allies were Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. In terms of naval power, both these states were flawed – Austria-Hungary was landlocked and the Ottoman Empire's former strength was already waning.

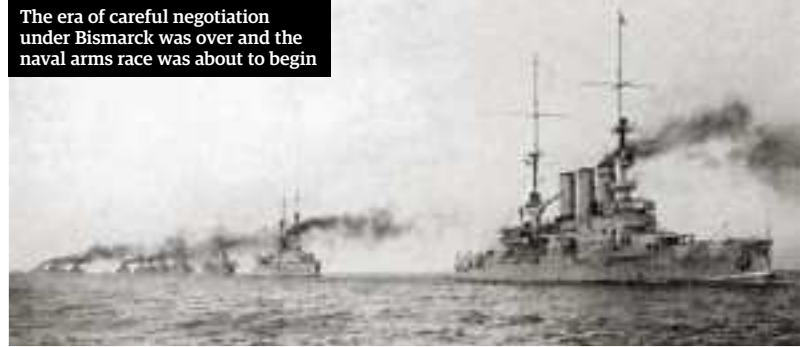
MANPOWER

Training was better on ships in the Imperial German Navy and the force only had to focus on the Atlantic.

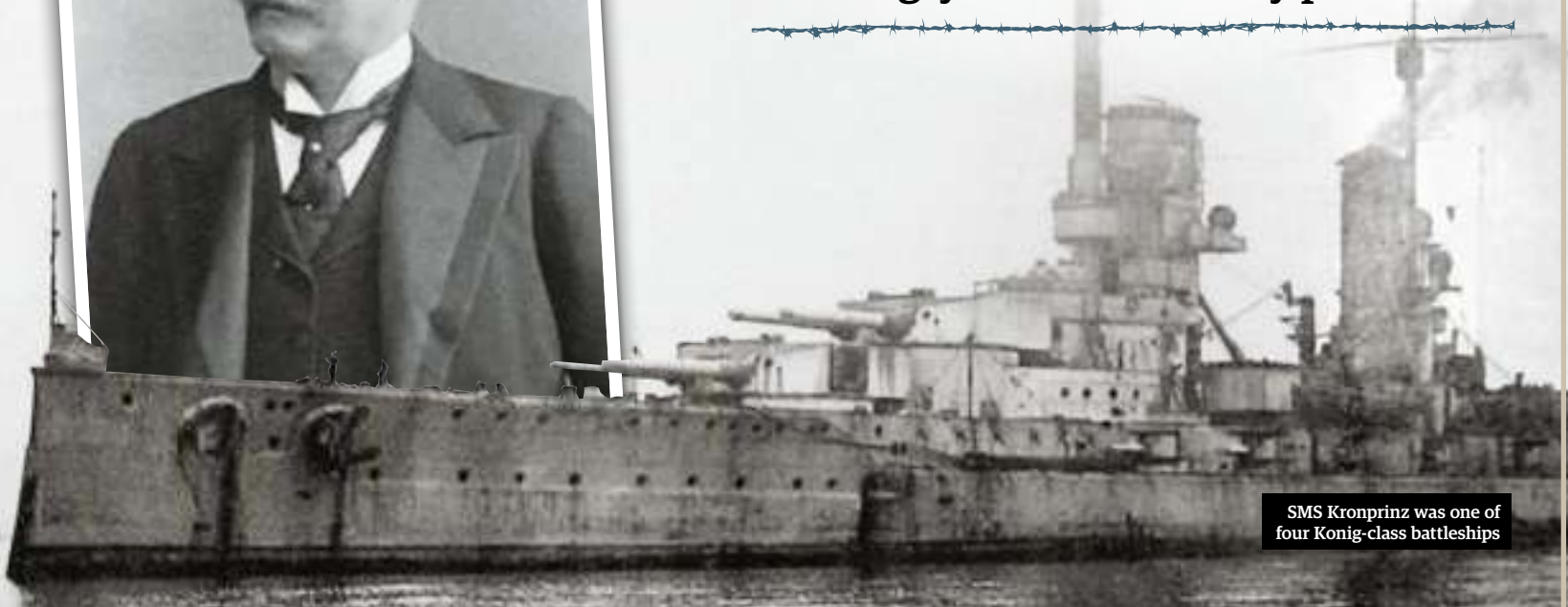
TOTAL



The era of careful negotiation under Bismarck was over and the naval arms race was about to begin



"Driven by a desire to compete with the world's elite nations, Germany was hungry for more military power"

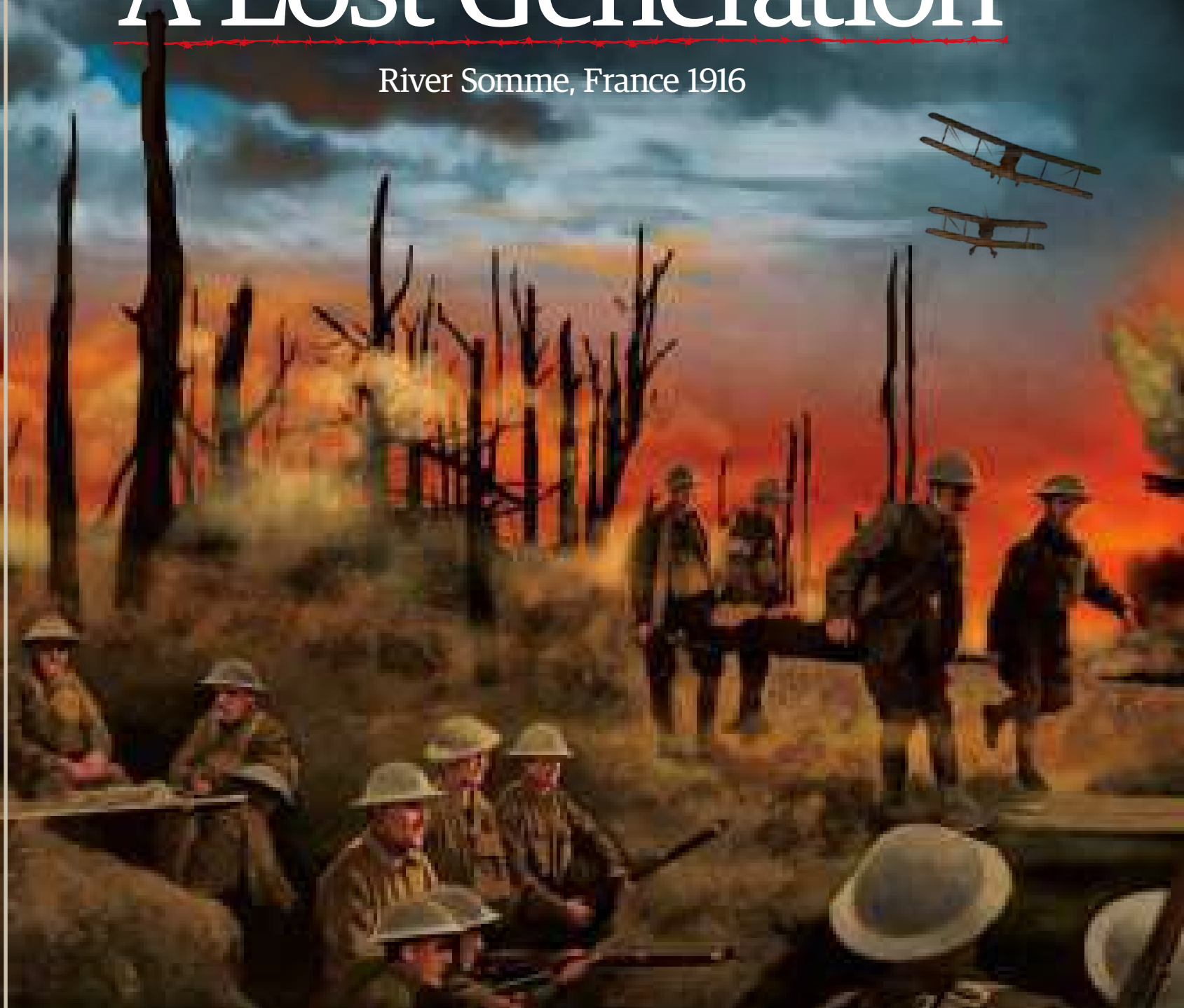


SMS Kronprinz was one of four König-class battleships

SOMME

A Lost Generation

River Somme, France 1916





On 1 July 1916, tens of thousands of British soldiers marched into the jaws of death. It would become the bloodiest day in the history of the British Army: Nearly 20,000 Tommies were killed for little territorial gain. Nearly 30,000 more were

wounded. What was supposed to be the scintillating start of the push towards defeat of the Central Powers became a bloodbath as thousands of men walked into the crosshairs of German MG 08s.

The men who bore the brunt of the machine-gun fire were part of Herbert Kitchener's New Army, a force assembled to provide Britain with the extra military muscle that would help turn the tide of the war. Conscription wasn't popular back home, but Kitchener, the secretary of state for war, devised another way to bolster the ranks: a recruitment campaign appealing to single men between the ages of 18 and 41 to fight for king and country. The British Army only numbered 250,000 at the start of the war and, although highly trained, this was not enough for a conflict on this scale. The call to arms recruited an extra 500,000 men as the British Army, a professional force, took on a new wave of volunteers who would become the spine of a new look military.

Each volunteer signed for a three-year contract. Fired up by patriotism, for many their first major offensive would be the Somme. In the opposing trenches stood the most formidable land force in the world, a conscript army that had trained for years: the Imperial German Army. Going up against them would be these British boys, oblivious to the true horrors of war. The artillery fell silent and the officer's whistles were blown. It was time to go over the top.

A church service is held at a camp in Basingstoke but some of the members of the Irish 10th Division seem more interested in the camera





Affectionately known as 'Papa Joffre', Joseph Joffre called the shots in the lead up to the Somme Offensive

WHY THE SOMME?

The Allied High Command decreed that northern France was the theatre in which the war would be won or lost. Joseph Joffre, commander in chief of the French military, called a meeting at Chantilly on 29 December 1915 to reveal his new idea. The plan was for a Franco-British offensive on an extensive front across the River Somme. The head of the French Army, General Ferdinand Foch, and British commander Henry Rawlinson weren't keen on the idea, and even Field Marshal Douglas Haig preferred an attack with naval support. A slightly reluctant agreement was reached when Germany unleashed a devastating attack on Verdun on 21 February 1916. If successful, the new front would reduce the almost unbearable pressure on the French and punch a hole into the German resolve - a war of attrition that would grind the German war machine into the dust.

THE PALS BATTALIONS

Since the outbreak of war in 1914, posters of Kitchener had adorned notice boards all over Britain and more than 20 million recruitment leaflets had been printed. The aim was to create a civic pride and even a friendly rivalry between cities to spur the men on to sign up. It seemed to work, as in Liverpool, for instance, four battalions were raised in a number of days even though only one was actually requested. The news coming out of Merseyside encouraged other cities to repeat this feat, and the 'Pals Battalions' were born.

Munitions shortages such as the shell crisis of 1915 had an adverse effect on the training of these new troops. Many of the drills were carried out with wooden poles and broomsticks in the place of rifles, and the men slept in makeshift barracks. As all the experienced troops were already at the front, the new recruits had to be trained by elderly and retired soldiers, who knew little of modern warfare. The training and lifestyle was quite simply a world away from facing German machine guns at the Somme. This training continued until the summer of 1916, when the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) needed support more than ever. The time had come for the men of the Pals Battalions to head for the coast and fields of Northern France. 557

battalions of fresh-faced Tommies had no idea of the storm they were heading in to.

Waterloo station was awash with recruits

from all across the British Isles, eager to get a piece of the action. It was so hectic that mounted police were even called in to keep the crowds in check. There were 1,000 men from the Lancashire town of Accrington and a full strength battalion from Sheffield full of stockbrokers, students, journalists and teachers. A headmaster in Grimsby had even raised a company

of 250 schoolboys and offered them to the local battalion for service. East Grinstead boasted a sportsmen's battalion that even included an England lightweight boxing champion. The full spectrum of society was present from public schoolboys to shop assistants. No British Army has ever incorporated such a high

proportion of men acquired from local communities before or since.



Who was Herbert Kitchener?

The British public trusted Kitchener after his success at the Battle of Omdurman. During World War I, he was criticised for his support of the Gallipoli Campaign and role in the 'Shell Crisis'. He died in 1916 on board a ship sent to the depths by German mines.

THE BOMBARDMENT BEGINS

The thunder of 1,500 British howitzers lasted for an entire week as 1.738 million shells were fired at the enemy. This incredible barrage of missiles was one of the largest in history, and although it wasn't as targeted and thorough as perhaps Haig would have liked, it was nonetheless a huge onslaught. What the British and French





didn't know, however, was that the Germans had entrenched their bombproof shelters in the chalky soil of the Somme so well that the bombardment was largely nullified. Even the barbed wire, which was notoriously thick and tangled, survived much of the shelling. However, the Allied High Command couldn't know this, and the lack of accurate reconnaissance meant that when the barrage finally stopped, they fully expected the infantry to defeat what was left of the enemy with ease. Sadly, this was not to be the case, and when the bombing subsided, the Germans manned their machine guns knowing an infantry rush would not be far away.

The soldiers may have gleefully sung as they waited in the trenches, but on that fateful summer's day they were a collection of individuals, not an army that would bring the main player within the Central Powers crashing

down. Haig had initially wanted to delay the attack as he believed that with further training his forces would be able to unleash a more effective attack. However, France could not hold Verdun for any longer. The ill-fated assault got under way at 7.30am.

A BLACK DAY FOR THE BRITISH

The 36th (Ulster) Division is believed to have been the only unit to maintain ground for a significant period of time on the first day. Out of the 720 Accrington pals who fought, 584 were killed or wounded, and the pals from Leeds, Grimsby and Sheffield lost similar numbers. The day ended with minimal gains, but some companies had advanced into and taken Peake Trench, the German front position on the right flank of the front line in the Birch Tree Wood area. The first media reports emerged on 3 July,

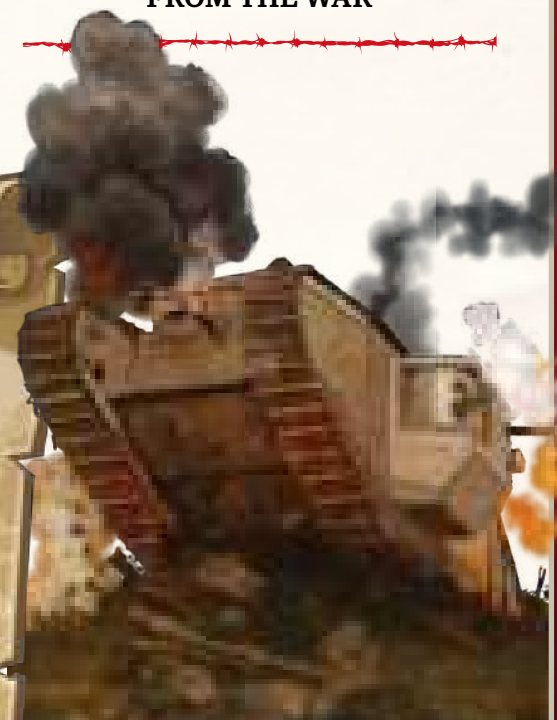
"We beat 'em on the Marne, we beat 'em on the Aisne, we gave 'em hell at Neuve Chapelle and here we are again"

A TOMMY SONG FROM THE WAR

THE VERDUN EFFECT

With the French focusing on the Battle of Verdun, more British divisions had to step up. The BEF had been severely depleted, so the new recruits were desperately needed for the Somme Offensive. A mighty 27 divisions were ready to 'bash the Boche' on day one of the Somme, with 19 of these made up of New Army recruits. These 750,000 British men

faced off against 16 divisions of the German Second Army. The Somme was the first time Britain had deployed an army of this size against the core of the German military machine. Although the French were preoccupied with Verdun, they mustered 11 divisions, which were positioned on the south end of the front. Their assistance was invaluable.



A British Tommy at the Somme

Helmet

The Brodie helmet became standard issue by summer 1916 and was cheap and easy to mass produce. Lower velocity bullets would dent the helmet but not penetrate.

Bayonet

When things got close and personal with the Germans, a bayonet could get a Tommy out of trouble. The 40-centimetre-long blade could do some serious damage up close.

Rifle

The long-standing weapon of choice, this model of the Lee Enfield rifle was first used in 1907 and was of a .303in short magazine design.

Uniform

A four-pocket khaki service dress was worn along with brown leather ammunition boots. Both had to be durable to last out in the mud of the Somme.

Biscuit tins

The Tommies were made easier to spot by metal triangles on their back that glistened in the sun. This, however, made it easier for the Germans to latch their crosshairs onto them.

Equipment

120 rifle rounds were carried by each soldier along with a two-pint water bottle to quench thirst while they were in the heat of battle.

The British war machine rumbles forward towards the frontline prior to the first day of the Somme Offensive

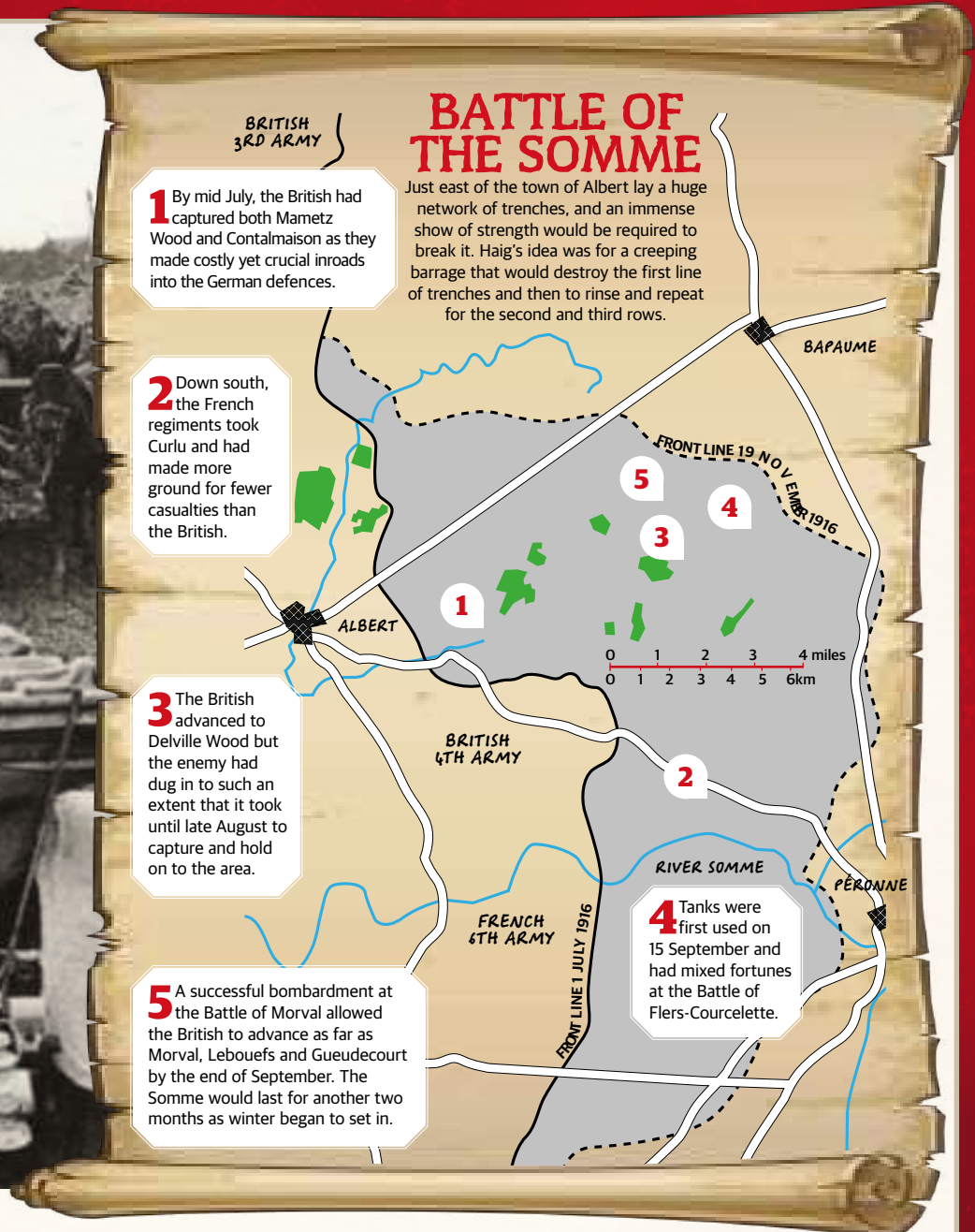


Wounded German soldiers are escorted behind the lines as Tommies watch on from their trenches

but the journalism was inaccurate to say the least. Both John Irvine's report for the *Daily Express* and an article by the *Daily Chronicle* were immensely positive about the events and made no mention of the slaughter. The reason for this is likely down to the sources being high-ranking military officers unaware of the plight of the Volunteer Army. Away from the British media, casualty lists began to slowly reach the families of those who had given up their lives on the first few days of the Somme. Villages and neighbourhoods back home would never be the same.

THE SLAUGHTER CONTINUES

On day two, the troops were again rushed into battle. As food, water and ammunition reached the new front, the 15th Battalion captured 53 prisoners including three officers. The 7th East Lancashire Regiment even managed to capture Heligoland, an area of strong German defences. The 15th Battalion were one of the most successful units from the first few days of the



Somme but their tiny two-kilometre advance, the best of any group, had come at a terrible price, losing 18 officers and 610 soldiers. The 16th Battalion hadn't fared much better with 12 officers and 460 soldiers dead on the battlefield.

Elsewhere, the 11th and 12th battalions had missed the first attacks but went into battle on the 2 July, attacking Bernafay Wood and capturing the retreating German soldiers' field guns. The enemy had the last laugh, however, and began shelling the area, killing huge numbers. The battalions managed to hold their line until 8 July when they were withdrawn for a much-needed rest. It must be remembered that the first few days of the Somme weren't without some gains as Mametz, Fricourt and Montauban were captured on the Thiepval-Morval ridge, but the loss of human life was still excruciating to bear.

One of the reasons so many perished was due to the strictness of the orders. The generals realised that this 'army' was not an expertly drilled force, so made their instructions as

detailed as possible. The result was a distinct lack of initiative, so even if the battalions could find a potential way out of the slaughter, they would not try to seek it. Some believe that one of the motives behind the huge artillery bombardment was that both Haig and Rawlinson had doubts about the calibre of the soldiers and wanted to make the assault as easy as possible for their men.

The early days of the Somme did see some success, however. The courage shown by the Volunteer Army had put so much pressure on the German war machine that Chief of the German General Staff Erich Von Falkenhayn was forced to postpone major offensive operations at Verdun in July, relieving the burden on the battered French troops. Bazentin Ridge was taken by British forces in the same month and some of the hardest fighting of the whole battle took place at Delville Wood, with Australian and South African troops assisting the overworked Pals Battalions.

There were 100,000 German casualties in a fire fight at the village of Ginchy as Kitchener's boys began to come into their own.

DAWN OF THE TANK

The British infantry was up against it for the first few months of the Somme. The German trenches only sported insignificant scars from the artillery bombardment and the British papers spoke of the horror of corpse after corpse stacking up on the battlefield. A potential antidote to the perilous situation came in September when the Volunteer Army witnessed the first ever tanks on the world's battlefields. 49 tanks were introduced initially, but there were problems from the start as only about 20 of the machines that eventually reached the front line were battle ready.

The landships, as they were first known, were kept in the greatest secrecy and very few men had trained with them prior to the Somme.



The Battle of the Somme witnessed the debut of the Mark I tank, which achieved mixed results on the battlefield

Some even believed they were being sent water tanks to quench the infantry's thirst, such was the scarcity of information. The 28-ton Mark I tanks lumbered towards the enemy lines in a slow and steady yet relentless advance. The tanks arrived on the field at 6.20am on 15 September. While the Tommies watched on in awe, inside the behemoths was a frantic scene as the crew battled the heat and noise to keep the momentum of the tracks and fire the weaponry. Gunners and loaders struggled to aim as the vibration of the tank was so violent, while the three drivers each needed did battle against a complex system of gearboxes. The Germans were visibly frightened by these mechanical monsters, however, and both Flers and Courcellette fell, with the advancement resulting in gains of roughly 2,300 metres across a five kilometre front on 15 September.

Tanks were the great new hope, and eyewitnesses described their ability to flatten walls and demolish barbed wire as a whole new type of warfare, as the British soldiers used the massive machines like bullet sponges. At one point, 400 Germans waved the white flag towards two immobilised tanks - they were that unsure of this alien device with almost unreal firepower. All reports of tanks on the battlefield were censored by the German press, which did not want to report this new threat for fear of lowering morale. However, as it dawned that they were unreliable, the Germans stopped surrendering on the spot and began to devise ways of taking them out, minimising their effectiveness. The Mark I's problematic technical issues and the lack of tactics given to the Volunteer Army curtailed their influence. Some tanks got through the German defences and performed their duty admirably, but ultimately the execution was rushed, and every Tommy turned back to their lines and sighed as another Mark I plummeted into the abyss of a wide enemy trench.

THE ROAD TO WINTER

The gains made on 15 September were the greatest since the Battle of the Somme began. The entire month was the largest loss of life for the German Army during the battle and the Fourth Army managed to capture Morval on 28 September even without any armoured assistance. Thiepval Ridge was also taken and both sides believed it to be the most critical high point of the surrounding area. The Volunteer Army were seemingly becoming accustomed to the battle they were in but still, only minimal gains were

being made and the Germans were happy to utilise a holding campaign. After the occupation of the valuable ridge, Haig was intent on pressing for more strategic gains. As the weather worsened, the Battle of Le Transloy raged on for two full days until the Germans were finally driven from the area. The Somme was turning into a rain-soaked swamp but still the British attacked as winter drew in.

The conditions at Le Transloy fast became unsustainable but fighting was still taking place on the Ancre Heights. The targets for the British battalions were the Schwaben Redoubt and the Stuff Redoubt, German defensive positions that had caused so much pain to the Volunteer Army over the last few months. Both of these key areas were stormed by the courageous troops who fought through defiantly the heavy rain and even heavier enemy fire. As the last month of the Somme dawned, what would be the final few operations were conducted alongside the River Ancre between 13 and 19 November.

The artillery bombardment began at 5.45am, and after it came the infantry, who advanced painfully through swathes of mud. The following seven days of attacks summed up the Somme as a whole - some tactical successes was achieved but with a terrible loss of life. It was hoped that this late surge could be invaluable in an eventual British and French victory, but in the torrential rain, no major gains were made except for the wounding of a young German corporal in the 6th Bavarian Reserve Division named Adolf Hitler.

AFTERMATH: THE LOST GENERATION

The four and a half month-long battle ended as the downpours turned into freezing sleet. The

SOMME VICTORIA CROSS HEROES

A selection of the brave 51 men who won a VC at the Somme

Frederick Jeremiah Edwards

A fearless Irishman skilled at flushing out enemy positions with grenades

In September, the British, now bolstered by tanks, were intent on capturing Thiepval Ridge, a German stronghold located on valuable high ground. Part of the Middlesex Regiment, Edwards showed immense bravery by doing what his officers could not - using grenades to take out a machine-gun nest. The private kept fighting on until 1918 when he was captured by the Germans. He survived the war but was sadly forced to sell his VC in peacetime when he was strapped for cash.



David Jones

Driving back the Imperial German Army with no food or water

This young sergeant's defining moment came on 3 September 1916 at Guillemont. After witnessing his commanding officer being gunned down by Germans, Jones took control of the platoon and managed to capture a key road, which they would go on to hold for two more days - while enduring three waves of German attacks. This heroism earned the Liverpudlian his VC, but he sadly never lived to see it as he was killed in the Battle for Transloy Ridges just a month later.



Donald Simpson Bell

The only professional footballer to be awarded a Victoria Cross

Bell enthusiastically answered Kitchener's call, joining the West Yorkshire Regiment in November 1914. He arrived on the Somme shortly after returning from his honeymoon, and on 5 July, he was tasked with assaulting enemy lines. Under heavy fire from a German machine gun, he managed to take it out by launching an expertly placed grenade. He was sadly killed five days later, but his heroism was not forgotten and the area is now known as 'Bell's Redoubt' after him.



James Youll Turnbull

The tough Glaswegian who single-handedly defended a trench

A member of the highland light Infantry, James Turnbull enlisted in the Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers prior to the outbreak of the war. He was one of the brave men who ventured over the top when the bombardment ended on 1 July and, despite his whole squad being taken down, he managed to make his objective. Holding his position, he hopped on enemy machine guns and threw back German grenades, however, the brave Scotsman was the victim of a German sniper later that day.



Gabriel George Coury

A brave Liverpudlian who saved one of his own while putting his life in the balance

By 8 August 1916, the British were on the advance through the village of Guillemont. Second Lieutenant Gabriel George Coury of the South Lancashire Regiment was under orders to construct a new communication trench. The back-breaking task was completed but men were still being lost. At one point, Coury charged into full view of the enemy to save an injured officer. Putting his life in danger, he leapt back into the trench with his comrade while being strafed by German machine-gun fire.



A German soldier sports a Stahlhelm, the replacement for the spiked Pickelhaube that came into use in 1916

British forces had suffered a total of 420,000 casualties. The Volunteer Army had been through hell, seizing only a strip of territory that was 32 kilometres long and 10 kilometres deep. After the Battle of the Somme, any optimistic patriotism had melted away and men were less willing to sign up, and conscription had to take centre stage as a more effective means of army recruitment as a result.

The Pals Battalions were a two-year experiment that was obliterated at the Battle of the Somme, but Kitchener's New Army was no longer a group of individuals - it was a well-drilled and experienced professional force. The Somme wasn't all tactical and strategic oversights. Out of the trenches emerged a better land army with a hardened resolve that would take the fight to the Central Powers in subsequent conflicts at Cambrai and Arras and once again at the Somme in 1918.

The battle was a major defeat for the Imperial German Army and halted the Germans at Verdun. They hadn't anticipated that the British would fight so hard and the aim of 'bleeding France white' was stalled as they withdrew to the Hindenburg Line.

The heroism and stamina of Kitchener's soldiers had completely shone through and Britain's dogged and even blind determination to succeed had finally, and only just, won out in this bloody battle of attrition.

The Somme was a strategic success, but ultimately a pyrrhic victory, and the graveyards of the Pals Battalions resulted in a 'lost generation'. The men would never have a victory parade, and instead lay dead in the battlefields and trenches of northern France. It wasn't just British men who had suffered though. 200,000 Frenchmen lay with them, their job done in helping their countrymen hold on at Verdun.

Nearly 500,000 Germans were also killed at the Somme, a death toll the Central Powers would never quite recover from. Courage and tenacity had tipped the war in the Triple Entente's favour and sent shockwaves to the Kaiser as he realised the extent of British resolve.

In two years, the war was over and Germany resorted to unrestricted submarine warfare and then coerced the USA into the war. Germany would be on the back foot for the remainder of the war after the Volunteer Army's heroics at the battle of the Somme.



FORGOTTEN FRONTS OF WORLD WAR I

We explore the horrors and heroics that took place beyond the Western Front of Europe

Words Callum McKelvie

EXPERT BIO

Leading military historian Dr Peter Johnston is head of research and academic access at the National Army Museum in London. He has written about many areas of British military history, including British propaganda in WWI and the Falklands War.



Between 1914-18 over 30 nations declared war and joined in the conflict which we now remember as World War I. There were troops everywhere from the Middle East to Africa. Yet today when we see the conflict portrayed in films, books and documentaries the prevailing image is of the Western Front and France, from novels such as *All Quiet On The Western Front* to films such as *Sam Mendes's 1917*.

Speaking to Dr Peter Johnston, head of research at the National Army Museum in Chelsea, we asked him about some of World War I's 'forgotten fronts'. "The popular memory of World War I in Britain is dominated by imagery

of the Western Front, of trenches, of mud, and of British men struggling to advance over small patches of ground," he says. "But the conflict saw the British Army engaged across the world; British troops fought in Europe, in east, west and south-west Africa, at Gallipoli in Turkey, in Mesopotamia and Palestine, and even as far afield as China."

Moving even further away and examining other fronts, most of which the British forces had no involvement in, a vast array of rarely-spoken-of areas of battle emerge that completely shatter the popular image that many of us have of the war. Over the next few pages we highlight some of these forgotten fronts, showing the truly global nature of World War I.

China

China, initially neutral, found itself acting as an important battle ground in the early years of the war. "The port of Tsingtao was fought over by the British and Germans," Johnston explains. "But the war also saw China open itself up far more to the world. The main form this took was the supplying of workers in lieu of soldiers for service in Europe. The French and British started to bring Chinese workers to France as early as 1916 to act as labourers, freeing up more of their soldiers for frontline service. Of all the international labourers brought to Europe, China sent the largest number of men, around 140,000, and its workers remained in France the longest. Those recruited by the British were collectively known as the Chinese Labour Corps, and would continue working on the former battlefields until 1920. Those under the French stayed until 1922, working to clear live ammunition, exhume bodies from battlefields and carve gravestones for war cemeteries. These Chinese labourers were critical to the British and French war efforts and about 3,000 men lost their lives."

However, despite this, following the war a schism emerged between the allies as they refused to assist China in liberating those areas that had been occupied by the Japanese in the



Chinese labourers were vital to the British and French

early years of the war. "China had declared war on Germany and joined the Allied side in 1917," Johnston continues. "But in the aftermath of the war the Great Powers - Britain, France and the USA - treated China unfairly and refused to return Shandong, instead allowing Japan to take over German interests in China. Shandong

was an integral part of Chinese territory and was considered to be the cradle of Chinese civilization and a Holy Land for the Chinese. Its inhabitants were entirely Chinese in race, language and religion. In return, China refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles - the only nation that refused to do so."

Malta saw an influx of soldiers wounded in the Gallipoli campaign



"In total, 136,121 wounded or sick soldiers were treated in Malta, earning it the nickname of 'the Nurse of the Mediterranean'"

Malta

Few places during World War I occupied the unique position of Malta, an archipelago located in the Mediterranean between Sicily and the North African coast. Dr Johnston explains: "Malta was a British colony in World War I and so was heavily involved in the war effort, particularly from 1915 onwards when campaigns were launched at Gallipoli and in Salonika in the Balkans." In 1915 the British, French and ANZAC forces began an ambitious amphibian assault at Gallipoli as part of a plot to allow Allied ships through the Dardanelles to finally defeat Ottoman Turkey. However, the campaign was a disaster and Malta suddenly found itself with an influx of wounded soldiers being sent there for treatment. "It was a major medical hub, with 27 military hospitals," Johnston tells us. "In total, 136,121 wounded or sick soldiers were treated in Malta, earning it the nickname of 'the Nurse of the Mediterranean'. Thousands are still there, buried in the cemeteries of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission."



Poorly equipped Russian soldiers suffered heavy losses

Africa

"Africa was an important battleground during World War I," Johnston tells us. "As well as supplying troops for the fighting - troops from French North Africa fought for France in Europe - it was also a major battleground. For the British, the war really began in west Africa three days after Britain declared war on Germany, with the first shots being fired on 7 August 1914 by Lance Corporal Alhaji Grunshi of the Gold Coast Regiment in Togoland, now Togo. There were further campaigns in Kamerun and south-west Africa, as well as in east Africa. This was the longest campaign of World War I, with fighting not formally ending until 25 November 1918."

But as stated previously, Africa was not just a battleground for the Western powers: many local people were conscripted and served both the Allies and Central Powers. "Africans from across the continent fought for both sides during the war, and their colonisers," Johnston continues. "They served as soldiers, but many more served as porters and carriers. As many as 90,000 carriers may have died in British service in the east African campaign."

However, like many battlegrounds during the conflict, the post-war cost for Africa was colossal and reached far and wide. "There were also severe consequences for Africa as a result of the war," Johnston explains. "As well as colonies changing hands, a combination of poor rains, and the casualties, resulted in poor harvests and famines, and the Spanish Flu pandemic also struck."

The bitter fighting in Africa during World War I has often been overlooked



The Eastern Front

In 1931 Winston Churchill penned a series of volumes examining the history of World War I. The work was titled *The Unknown War*, which seems particularly apt for the volume examining the campaign on the Eastern Front. That much of the Eastern Front's history remains untold is unusual, because compared to the West (where armies would face long periods in trenches fighting over small patches of land) the battle in the East was decidedly mobile.

Huge movements of troops were required by both the Germans, Russians and Austro-Hungarians as advances and retreats took place over hundreds of miles. Upon mobilisation, Russia's army was Europe's largest, with some 3.5

million men, and they were spread out on a front some 500km long. However, because of their large numbers, as the conflict wore on Russia struggled to equip its soldiers to fight (with some reports stating there was only one rifle for every three soldiers). Back in Russia, there was a constant struggle to mine the natural resources it had available and industrialise in such a way that they could be used to contribute to the war effort. The result was a shattering of moral and vast losses. These factors would be key contributors to the Russian Revolutions that would occur in 1917. When Vladimir Lenin seized control he negotiated the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany, which ended Russia's involvement in the war.

Around 3.5 million Russian troops fought in WWI



Lebanon

One of World War I's forgotten tragedies is the famine of Mount Lebanon in what was known as Greater Syria. On 25 August 1915, the Allied Powers declared a blockade on the Ottoman Empire's Mediterranean coast. There was of course an understanding such a policy would have a profound result upon the civilian population but the decision was taken anyway. As food shortages began, additional factors contributed to the continuing lack of food in the area. General Jamal Pasha, commander in chief of the Turkish forces

in Greater Syria, introduced a blockade of his own which prevented cereal and wheat from entering Mount Lebanon. Finally, a swarm of locusts descended and devoured all the crops and harvests that had not been distributed among the Ottoman military. The famine lasted for three years and claimed an estimated 500,000 lives.

In September 1918, British and Arabian forces under the command of General Edmund Allenby and Faysal I invaded Palestine, signalling the beginning of the occupation of Lebanon.

Australian cavalry prepare for battle



Sikh troops saw action in WWI

Japan

In 1902 Japan had signed an alliance with Great Britain, with the result being that in 1914 (like numerous other countries) they found themselves declaring war on Germany, despite deep misgivings about the prospect. Initially, numerous requests from Britain to provide naval or troop support were declined. In 1917, a task force of Japanese ships was sent to assist in the Mediterranean, named the Second Special Squadron.

However, Japan did focus much of its military efforts at home, seeing an unprecedented opportunity to expand into continental Asia. After issuing an

ultimatum demanding Germany withdraw its fleet from Asian waters and hand over the Jiaozhou Bay concession, the stage was set for the establishment of a military foothold in China. "Japan had taken the opportunity presented by the war to seize territories from Germany and expand its influence as a world power," Johnston explains. "While its short-term economic boom did not last, the comparative ease of Japan's victories, combined with domestic political instability, contributed to a growth of militarism that sought to further extend Japan's political dominance across South-East Asia and the Pacific and secure economic resources through the use of force."




Japan used WWI to seize territory held by Germany



THE LAST BATTLE



11 November 1918



Seeking a comrade's grave.
The scale of casualties in WWI
meant that some men were
buried where they fell or in
communal graves



At 9.30am on 11 November 1918, in the dying moments of World War I, 40-year-old Private George Ellison of the 5th Royal Irish Lancers found himself on a scouting mission on the outskirts of the Belgian town of Mons. Father-of-one Ellison, a former coal miner from Leeds, had been in Mons before. Four years earlier, as part of the Expeditionary Force, he had participated the British Army's first battle of the war - one that had ended in humiliating defeat. Since then, Ellison had survived every murderous technological twist World War I had produced, from trench warfare and machine-gun fire to high-explosive shells and poison gas. As well as Mons, he'd also fought at Ypres, Lens, Loos and Cambrai, some of the costliest battles of the deadliest war the world had ever seen and yet, somehow, he emerged unscathed.

Just 90 minutes before the Armistice, Ellison and his comrades were on the orders of British high command to retake the town they had lost

in 1914. As they were creeping through a wood, a hidden German infantryman lined Private George Ellison up in his sights.

The Russian Revolution of November 1917 changed everything. The entire dynamic of World War I suddenly and completely shifted, as Germany found itself no longer fighting a war on two fronts, but just one. With the collapse of the Eastern Front against Russia, German High Command could now concentrate all its efforts on its war in the west - efforts that would be reinvigorated by the freeing up of hundreds of thousands of men previously committed to vanquishing the tsar and his armies.

The Russian capitulation couldn't have come at a better time for the Germans. In April 1917, in response to German naval aggression in the north Atlantic and a bizarre diplomatic incident that had seen Germany attempt to spark a conflict between Mexico and the USA, the United States chose to side with Britain and France in their crusade against the kaiser.

Although American troops had not yet arrived in any great force, they were coming, and the Germans - not least their most influential commander, General Erich von Ludendorff - knew it.

Before the US troops had time to make a difference, Ludendorff now proposed that the Germans on the Western Front should unleash a huge offensive. One that would finally break the three and a half-year deadlock of trench warfare, allowing German troops to seize Paris and end the war.

On 21 March 1918, that offensive began as the German army attacked along a 102-kilometre front. What became known as the Ludendorff Offensive was the biggest attack then known in modern industrialised warfare, around 10,000 artillery pieces simultaneously pounded the Allied lines. When the artillery bombardment lifted, lightly equipped, fast-moving shock troops (or storm troopers) raced across No-Man's Land, armed with flamethrowers, light machine guns and grenades. Their aim wasn't so much to seize

"When the artillery bombardment lifted, lightly equipped, fast-moving shock troops (or storm troopers) raced across No-Man's Land, armed with flamethrowers, light machine guns and grenades"



"Ludendorff's troops had advanced 48 kilometres to reach the River Marne. The glittering prize of Paris was now on the horizon"



A German war cemetery containing five thousand graves at Sully-sur-la-Lys, 12 October 1918



forward trenches, but to infiltrate the rear of the Allied line, causing it to collapse, while heavy infantry mopped up the area in between.

It proved to be an effective tactic. In just over a fortnight, the German army advanced 32 kilometres over an 80-kilometre front. A capture of territory compared to the stalemate of the previous three years. The first part of the offensive ended on 4 April, leaving the Allies dizzied and bloodied. Britain and France were now critically close to losing the war.

Ludendorff then set his sights on Paris, just 145 kilometres to the south of his line. If the Germans captured it, victory would be theirs. On 26 May, the German army renewed its offensive, and within four days, Ludendorff's troops had advanced 48 kilometres to reach the River Marne. The glittering prize of Paris was now on the horizon.

These huge successes hadn't come without a price, however. The German army had suffered about 350,000 casualties and had fought itself almost to a standstill. Although weak and exhausted, Ludendorff now demanded one last mighty push from his war-weary army.

On 15 July 1918, 52 German divisions attacked the Allied line. Having learned from previous encounters though, French defences were set well back and when German Storm Troopers reached them, they proved to have been out of range of their artillery support. Undamaged, they easily withstood the German assault. Ludendorff's gamble had failed and it was now the Allies' turn to go on the offensive.

In a series of massive co-ordinated blows that heralded the birth of modern

battlefield tactics, the full power of the Allied war machine would now be unleashed against the shattered German forces.

A hint of what was to come occurred at the Battle of Hamel in the Somme Valley on 4 July 1918, when an Australian division pulled off a small-scale, pulverising attack on the Germans. With infantry advancing behind tanks, supported by masses of heavy artillery, machine-gun fire and aircraft providing top cover, the Australians swiftly overwhelmed German positions that had remained unbreached for years.

This pioneering assault convinced the combined French and British forces - now under the command of France's Marshal Ferdinand Foch - to repeat the tactic, but on a much grander scale. On 8 August, a huge attack was launched near the town of Amiens, spearheaded by 530 British and 70 French tanks. It was the beginning of what became known as the 100-day offensive, and it would finally win the Allies the war.

On the first day alone, the Allies advanced 12 kilometres, inflicting some 27,000 casualties on the bewildered Germans. This kind of fluid warfare had not been seen on the Western Front since 1914. Over the next month, the Allies pushed the Germans back a further 40 kilometres over a 65-kilometre front.



Relaxed Irish Guardsmen still at their posts, some five minutes before the signing of the armistice



“Attacking the Hindenburg Line was seen as a suicide mission, but in 1918, that was exactly what they were ordered to do”

An engraving of the armistice signed in a train carriage at Compiègne, France at 5am on 11 November 1918

By now, American troops were also arriving en masse. Under the command of General John J Pershing, they numbered more than 1 million by July 1918, and by mid-September 1918, they were ready to launch their first attack as an independent army. Their target was the wedge of territory held by the Germans known as the Saint-Mihiel salient. The assault lasted three days and was another overwhelming Allied victory. A few days later, American forces, now battle proven, joined the British and French for a major attack on the German army's defensive rear position - the Hindenburg Line.

The Hindenburg Line was Germany's insurance policy. Built in the winter of 1916-17, it was intended to halt any Allied breakthrough, and its network of deep trench systems, bunkers, concrete pillboxes and tangle of barbed wire had already proved its invincibility during the Battle of Arras the previous year. For the average Allied soldier, attacking the Hindenburg Line was seen as a suicide mission, but in September 1918, that was exactly what they were ordered to do.

In the last week of that month, 123 Allied divisions consisting of about 500,000 men gathered for the onslaught. Foch demanded that

his troops fight a fast, fluid action. The stalemate of trench warfare that had turned the Western Front into a meat grinder for so many years would soon be a thing of the past. With ever more accurate artillery barrages destroying enemy defences, and with tanks and aircraft supporting, and even resupplying the infantry, Foch's ambition for a war of movement was quickly realised.

Despite suffering thousands of casualties, the Allies broke through the once-impregnable Hindenburg Line in just three days, capturing it on 29 September. It was a huge psychological blow to the Germans. Even Ludendorff, Germany's



THE FINAL CASUALTIES

The men who were killed with just minutes to go



Augustin Trébuchon

Trébuchon was a runner with the 415th Infantry Regiment. At 10.45am on Armistice Day, he was halfway between Sedan and Charleville-Mézières when he was shot by a sniper. He'd been despatched to deliver a message

to frontline troops that soup would be served at 11.30am in celebration of the ceasefire.



Private George Lawrence Price

Price was part of a Canadian patrol ordered to take the village of Harvré. Approaching it, they came under machine-gun fire. Assaulting the house where the fire had come from, Price's unit had been abandoned.

When he stepped into the street to investigate further, a sniper killed him. It was 10.58am.



Sergeant Henry Gunther

On Armistice Day, Gunther's squad was ordered to destroy a roadblock defended by machine guns in the village of Chaumont-devant-Damvillers. In a last bid for a medal, Gunther single-handedly charged the

position. Despite shouts from the Germans to stop, he ran at them, firing until he was shot at precisely 10.59am.



most bellicose commander, could see Germany's situation was desperate. He then argued that an armistice should be sought while his troops still retained some ability to inflict damage. At least that way, he hoped to bargain for a peace settlement that preserved German pride and perhaps its territory.

Back in January 1918, President Woodrow Wilson had proposed a 14-point peace plan that would have produced a peaceful solution for all sides. Rejected at the time, it now seemed an attractive proposition to the Germans, who approached the USA in the hope of getting it ratified. However, a lot had happened since January and the Americans were no longer interested in a compromise. If Germany wanted peace, they would have to pay for it, and before that conversation could even happen, the kaiser would have to go. To traditionalists like Ludendorff, the abolition of the German monarchy was totally unthinkable. Germany's army should fight to the death defending its kaiser, or so he believed, and so the olive branch was withdrawn. But Ludendorff's militaristic idealism was about to be undone by political pragmatism.

By mid-October 1918, the German home front was on the brink of collapse. The Allied naval blockade had cut off much of the country's food supply and its people were now starving. Riots - many of them left wing in flavour - were breaking out on German streets as the people challenged an authority that had led them to the brink of calamity. Germany's army was now too running short of supplies, while its navy was near mutiny.



Men of the US 105th Field Artillery cheer for the camera after the armistice was announced

Then - on 26 October - the kaiser, under pressure from senior politicians, relieved the ever-loyal Ludendorff of his command.

On 8 November 1918, German and French negotiators met in a railway carriage in the French forest of Compiègne. The Allied delegation, led by Marshal Foch, whose own son had been lost in the war, were in no mood to negotiate. Without discussion, the vengeful Foch simply handed the Germans a list of 34 demands telling them they had 72 hours to agree or risk annihilation.

By the time the German delegation eventually returned to the railway carriage to sign the

armistice in the early hours of 11 November, Kaiser Wilhelm had resigned and had fled to Holland where he would live out the rest of his days in exile. In the intervening three days, about 7,500 troops on all sides had lost their lives fighting in a war that was effectively over.

Both sides agreed upon and signed the armistice at 5am but - despite German requests for an immediate ceasefire - the Allies insisted that an end to hostilities should be delayed until 11am that morning, that way the word could reach all of its commanders. As the news broke across London, Paris and New York, jubilant crowds began to gather to celebrate. During the six hours between the signing and the ceasefire, however, there was to be a continuation of the killing.

Different units heard about the armistice at different times, and when the order was given, other than to cease hostilities at 11am, it was left to local commanders to decide how they'd spend what remained of the war. For some military commanders, it meant standing their troops down, and thanking them for their sacrifice. For others, however, it was a fast fading opportunity for glory.

As the countdown to peace began, artillery on both sides unleashed bombardments, as if to use up every last round while they still could. Thousands of shells fell, killing and wounding men just hours from safety. One such bombardment was ordered by an American artillery captain who later wrote, "It's a shame we can't go in and devastate Germany, cut off a few of the German kids' hands and feet and scalp a few of their old men." The officer in question was future US President Harry S Truman, the man who would sanction the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the World War II.

Elsewhere on the line, troops were being ordered into action for one last crack at the enemy. Men like Private Ellison, the Leeds coalminer and father of one was killed at 9.30am as the British army symbolically retook Mons to end the war - 700,000 British lives later - in the same place it had begun.

"It's a shame we can't go in and devastate Germany, cut off a few of the German kids' hands and feet and scalp a few of their old men"

Jubilant civilians and servicemen celebrate the end of hostilities in London



ANARCHY AFTER THE ARMISTICE

Robert Gerwarth is a Professor of Modern History at University College Dublin, and director of the Centre for War Studies. His new book, *the vanquished*, explores the turbulent years in the aftermath of WWI



The Armistice of 1918 was the end of hostilities between the Great Powers, but was there still open conflict between certain states after 11 November?

While 11 November brought peace to the principal victor states of the Great War – France, the US, and Britain (minus Ireland) – the same cannot be said about the defeated, or indeed about Greece and Italy. For much of Europe, notably in its eastern half, the Great War was followed between 1918 and 1923 by a series of vicious inter-state wars, civil wars and other episodes of ethnic violence, killing more people than the combined wartime casualties of Britain, France and the US.

To what extent did the 'victors' of World War I exacerbate unrest and conflict across the continent between 1917-23?

The influence that the Western peacemakers in Paris in 1919 had over large swathes of territory in Eastern Europe has, perhaps, been exaggerated. The Western Allies had no meaningful military presence in that part of the world and could not call off the conflicts in the same way that hostilities could be brought to a halt in the west on 11 November 1918. That said, one of the most dangerous (though initially idealistic) concepts of the time was US President Woodrow Wilson's promise of national self-determination for the successor states of Europe's continental empires.

In 1918-19, Europe was fundamentally transformed from a continent dominated by land empires to a collection of new 'nation-states' that aspired to ethnic exclusivity while simultaneously being every bit as multi-ethnic as their imperial predecessors. Aggrieved minorities within these new nation-states were a distinctly radicalising force in European politics for the next three decades. In retrospect, one has to acknowledge that the multi-ethnic empires of Europe – though far from perfect – were better at dealing with the remarkable ethnic complexity of east and central Europe than the nation-states of subsequent decades. One obvious example here is that of the Jews of the Habsburg Empire. Up until 1918, they had been offered legal equality and security, but after the end of the Habsburg Empire, Jews were accused of being 'community aliens' or supporters of Bolshevism, and as such they were often violently persecuted.

One could also argue that the peace treaties of Paris, imposed on the democratic successor states of the defeated Central Powers, did little to appease revisionist nationalism in those countries. The democratic revolutions in central Europe of 1918-19 were henceforth associated by the political right with the defeat of 1918 and the 'dictated' peace treaties, which they had to accept. The democrats of Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and Hungary had not been responsible for the outcome of the war, but that did not matter in the public perception

Why were the Great Powers unwilling to intervene in subsequent conflicts, such as the Soviet-Polish War? What could the consequences have been had they done so?

Neither Britain nor France had any appetite for major military interventions after the horrors of the Great War. When the Americans proposed to march on Berlin and finish the war with a decisive victory, neither the French nor the British felt that a costly invasion of Germany proper could be communicated to their populations after four years of death and hardships. The home fronts would have had even less sympathy for military engagement in Eastern Europe. There was popular support in both countries for an independent Poland (if only to check German power from the east), but not at the price of more British or French soldiers' lives.

Both countries did intervene in the Russian Civil War, on the side of the 'whites', but the intervention forces were small in size and did not change the outcome (Lenin's ultimate victory in the Russian Civil War).

Lloyd George was also instrumental in escalating the Greco-Turkish War by encouraging Greek Prime Minister Venizelos to land in the western Anatolian port city of Smyrna, which had a Christian majority among its population. The result was a disaster, as Turkish nationalists under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal rallied in response to the Greek invasion.

After an extremely brutal three-year war, which saw countless atrocities on both sides, the Turks re-took Smyrna amid much bloodshed. This was followed by the Great Population Exchange – the involuntary expulsion of well over 1 million Christian Ottomans and Greek Muslims, that set a dangerous precedent for a century of expulsions.

What, in your opinion, were the key events or factors that were preventing universal peace from being achieved in the years that followed the Armistice?

The continuation of violence in many parts of Europe had several causes, but it is clear that three of them are particularly important throughout the continent. The first cause is the way in which World War I destroyed old structures without replacing them with stable new ones.

The Great War – a conflict between states, largely fought on military fronts – became the unintentional enabler of different, and ultimately even more ungovernable, forms of violence by leaving huge power vacuums in large parts of the continent. Power vacuums in which rival political and ethnic groups fought against each other over the future form and shape of the states that should succeed the collapsed land empires.

The dismantling of the land empires – and this is the second root cause of the violence that escalated in Europe after 1918 – and their replacement with aggressively insecure nation-states was something that was only adopted as an Allied war aim in early 1918. From our vantage point today, it is clear that the history of many of those successor states until 1945, was not an unqualified success story.

Thirdly, it is impossible to write a history of the post-war conflicts without mentioning the effects of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 on Russia and the rest of Europe. The successful coup of a relatively small group of Bolsheviks meant that – for the first time since the French Revolution of 1789 – a radical revolution had triumphed in one of Europe's principal states. The knock-on effects were enormous: on the political left, Lenin's October Revolution was seen as an inspiration, a model that was to be followed.

On the political right, the Russian Revolution was seen as the realisation of the worst nightmare: the triumph of the working classes over the old established order, the abolishment of private property and upper class privilege.

Even in countries that were not threatened by a Communist revolution, the post-war years saw a massive mobilisation of groups of the right, determined to destroy Bolshevism. The sometimes abstract and concrete fear of Bolshevism had an impact on the politics of interwar Europe, and neither Mussolini's ascent or that of Hitler can be explained without that historical backdrop.



Turkish soldiers wait in their trenches, ready to engage the Greeks during the Greco-Turkish war of 1919-1922

Robert Gerwarth's book, *The Vanquished*, is published by Allen Lane

Legendary Leaders of World War I

Top leaders during the Great War let nothing stand in their way, not the enemy, not rivals, not even allies, in their quest for victory. Some were forced to step down, but others soldiered on - unstoppable to the end

Words William E. Welsh



The Western Front served as the cockpit of the Great War, and it was on that front that the outcome of the conflict was decided. Each of these ten key figures bore momentous responsibility for the fate of their respective countries during the Great War.

Nine of the ten prominent figures profiled herein were directly or indirectly involved in supporting the Western Front operations of their respective nations or empires. Six of the ten key figures were either commanders-in-chief or chiefs of the general staff. Depending on the exact scope of their job and their nationality, these generals bore various titles, but their work was similar in many respects. Their jobs required a deep familiarity with the demands of logistics and mobilization, a thorough understanding of modern strategy and tactics, and strong leadership and diplomatic skills.

These high-ranking commanders were Joseph Joffre, Ferdinand Foch, Douglas Haig, John J Pershing, Paul von Hindenburg, and Erich Ludendorff. Each leader bore an immense weight

on his shoulders. They were responsible for their country's victory or defeat and for the fate of millions of soldiers lives they held in their hands.

Although he did not lead Russia's war effort until after Tsar Nicholas II's abdication, General Aleksei Brusilov conducted an offensive of such great renown in 1916 that it bears his name to this day. Brusilov found a way on the Eastern Front to avoid egregious casualties in a successful, large-scale attack against the Austro-Hungarian army. The attack so unravelled the Austro-Hungarian military leadership that in its aftermath the German supreme command stepped in and led its forces for the remainder of the war.

Statesmen such as German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, and US President Woodrow Wilson are included because of the role they played not only in galvanizing their people behind the war effort, but also for marshalling the war industries necessary to prosecute the war.

Nearly all of these key figures are household names. Each left his unique and indelible stamp on the course and outcome of the war.



Kaiser Wilhelm II

Nationality German **Position** Emperor

Kaiser Wilhelm II pushed Europe into total war with scant appreciation for the great harm it would cause the continent

Kaiser Wilhelm II stood at the head of the most efficient army at the outset of World War I with 3.8 million men under arms. Yet he was devoid of any appreciable talents as a military commander. "All he wished was to feel like Napoleon, to be like him without having to fight his battles," said Winston Churchill of the Kaiser.

The vain, bellicose, paranoid and recklessly confrontational German emperor had by the outbreak of the war not only alienated foreign leaders, but also his own ministers and generals. His antics on the world stage would have been comical if he had not pushed the world to the brink of war. He sought to carry forward the Prussian military tradition but proved woefully incompetent as a strategist.

His political aim in the years leading up to World War I, was the fulfilment of Weltpolitik, the foundations of which were the acquisition of overseas colonies, creation of a global navy, and aggressive diplomacy. He was complicit in the unchecked rush to war in the wake of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand's assassination in June 1914.

Once Germany became bogged down in a protracted, two-front war, he strived to influence German military operations, but his advice was disregarded at the outset of the war by Chief of the General Staff Helmuth von Moltke and Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg. Like a child he could not stick consistently to one sound strategy, but vacillated back and forth between eccentric military policies and the desire to make peace overtures to Germany's enemies.

He eventually alienated so many of his generals that by 1916 he found himself with no choice but to accept the so-called Silent Dictatorship of Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff. When Germany failed to achieve victory, they ordered him to abdicate and accept exile in The Netherlands. No longer having any real power, he meekly complied.



Kaiser Wilhelm II aspired to be a great general but lacked the slightest degree of military genius



Third cousins Kaiser Wilhelm II (right) and Tsar Nicholas II communicated at length in the so-called Willy-Nicky correspondence before the war in which they tried but failed to avoid war



Paul von Hindenburg

Nationality German

Position Chief of the German General Staff

Paul von Hindenburg rescued Germany in an early hour of great need, but failed it over the long haul with a bankrupt strategy of total war

More than 220,000 Russians were marching into the rear of the Germany army on the country's eastern frontier in August 1914 just two weeks after the start of the war. It was a dire situation. Called from retirement at the age of 65, Prussian-born General Paul von Hindenburg boarded a special train and rode with his new chief of staff General Erich Ludendorff straight to the endangered front. Together they masterminded the German victory at Tannenberg that annihilated the Russian Second Army. The victory catapulted Hindenburg into the pantheon of Germany's greatest war heroes.

Hindenburg personified the Prussian military tradition. Promoted to field marshal following Tannenberg, he assumed control of all German forces on the Eastern Front in autumn 1914. Dignified, confident, and calm he stepped forward to manage a complex war on two fronts. Hindenburg became a grandfather figure to the Germans. With his right-hand-man Ludendorff with whom he was "one in thought and action," to quote his own words, Hindenburg ascended to a "silent dictatorship" in which he enjoyed power that rivalled that of the Kaiser.

Following his promotion to field marshal, a power struggle ensued with German Chief of the General Staff Erich von Falkenhayn over military priorities. Hindenburg ultimately replaced Falkenhayn in the key post in August 1916. From that point forward, Hindenburg instituted plans and initiatives that were manifestations of his belief in total war. These included the armaments program that bore his name, unrestricted submarine warfare, and the spring offensive of 1918. Rather than carry Germany to victory, these failed efforts revealed an overall lack of sound strategy and political skills found in the great commanders of history. In the end, he failed the soldiers and citizens of Germany.



Hindenburg (left) referred to his symbiotic relationship with Quartermaster General Erich Ludendorff as a happy marriage



Douglas Haig's air of superiority intimidated subordinate officers who were afraid to question his plans

Douglas Haig

Nationality British
Position Commander in Chief,
British Expeditionary Force

Douglas Haig tried unsuccessfully over the course of the war to break through German defences on the Western Front running up high casualties in the process

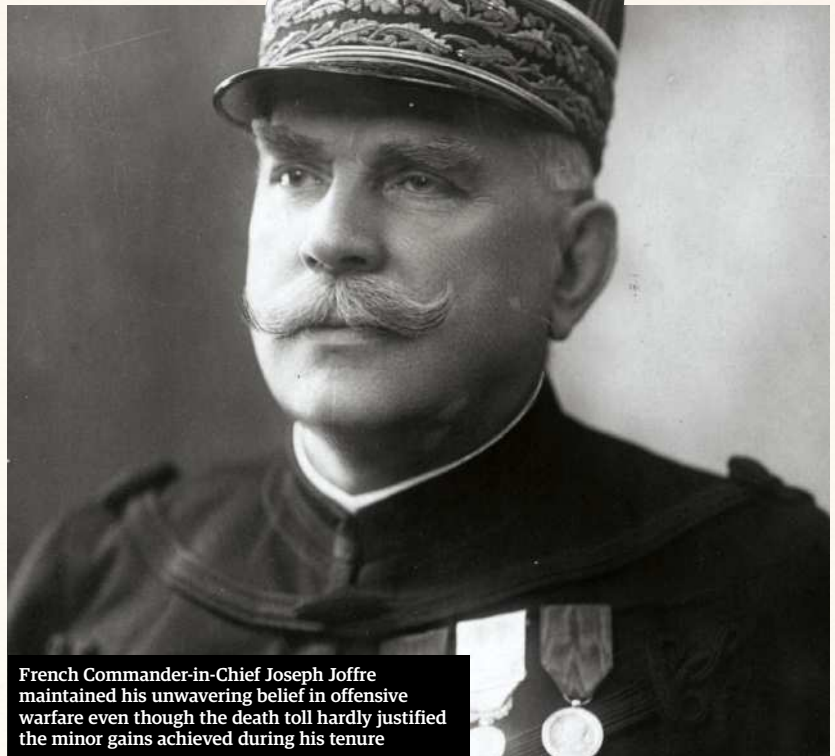
First Army commander Lieutenant General Douglas Haig desperately wanted his forces to achieve a breakthrough at Loos in northern France in September 1915. He threw his reserves in on the second day, but the Germans already had reinforced their positions and it was a missed opportunity. The experience is a metaphor for the breakthrough that always seemed to elude Haig.

Climbing the ladder to the top, Haig was more than willing to knock others out of the way. He blamed the failure of British forces at Loos on Field Marshal John French, and Haig succeeded him in December 1915 as commander-in-chief of the British Expeditionary Forces. Like other generals, he underwent many hard lessons in tactics during the Great War.

On the positive side, Haig was optimistic, unflappable, and focused. On the negative side he was aloof, arrogant, and combative. A trained cavalry officer, he clung to the idea that mounted troops could exploit a breakthrough. To his credit, though, he was open to some of the new weapons such as tanks. He used them in the Somme offensive of 1916, but in numbers too small to make a difference.

At the Somme, and again a year later at Passchendaele, he simply did not know when to abandon a failed offensive. He continued to feed men into the meat grinder of trench warfare when he should have quit months earlier. The British and commonwealth forces suffered 420,000 and 260,000 casualties, respectively, at Somme and Passchendaele. This alone was reason enough for the sobriquet 'Butcher Haig'.

The wheels of victory began to turn in 1918. The British surged forward in the Hundred Days offensives in the second half of 1918. Haig had real staying power, and he was still in command on Armistice Day.



French Commander-in-Chief Joseph Joffre maintained his unwavering belief in offensive warfare even though the death toll hardly justified the minor gains achieved during his tenure

Joseph Joffre

Nationality French **Position** Chief of the General Staff

Joseph Joffre directed the French forces on the Western Front with steadfast determination maintaining an active defence against the unrelenting German onslaught

French Chief of Staff General Joseph Joffre's was a die-hard believer in carrying the fight to the enemy. His bull-headed approach to launching repeated offensives with little appreciable success throughout the first two years of the Great War would ultimately lead to his replacement.

As the Germans gained the initial advantage on the Western Front by launching a surprise attack on Belgium that allowed them to push as far as the Marne River in northwestern France, Joffre put plan XVII in effect, which called for the French to "advance with all forces united" against the Germans.

Joffre's first attack against the Germans on the fourth day of the war failed. To consolidate their line, the French withdrew during the so-called Great Retreat of late August. Joffre's finest hour orchestrating French forces came during the subsequent First Battle of Marne. Sticking to his pledge to attack at all costs, Joffre launched a sweeping counterattack, in concert with the British, on September 5-6 that involved six French field armies. The bold gamble hurled back the Germans.

Joffre was an eternal optimist. At a time when the horrific casualties experienced on the Western Front tried lesser generals' souls, Joffre remained steadfast and confident despite repeated setbacks. Importantly, he never lost the confidence of his troops, who affectionately dubbed him Papa Joffre.

Criticism against Joffre mounted during the year-long German offensive at Verdun in the third year of the Great War. Joffre initially failed to appreciate the depth and breadth of the German assault. Outnumbered and outgunned, Joffre was unable to pull off a successful counterattack.

At the end of the epic battle, the French government replaced Joffre on 13 December 1916. He retired with honour, receiving the title of marshal of France as he passed the baton to Robert Nivelle.



Minister of War David Lloyd George and First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill in October 1915. Lloyd George's masterful handling of wartime production and logistics offset his strategic naivete

David Lloyd George

Nationality British **Position** British Prime Minister

Although the Liberals traditionally opposed war, Lloyd George understood the importance of defending his nation from aggression

Even though Britain's Liberal Party, of which British Chancellor of the Exchequer David Lloyd George was a member, traditionally opposed war, Lloyd George was willing to break tradition in the face of German aggression. "Britain should at all hazards maintain her place and her prestige amongst the Great Powers of the world," he said in 1911.

After serving seven years in that office, he became Minister of Munitions in May 1915, and then took over as Secretary of State for War in July 1916 upon Lord Kitchener's death. In these important cabinet positions, he persuaded British businessmen to convert factories to producing arms, ammunition, and equipment essential to the war effort.

When he replaced Asquith as prime minister of Britain in December 1916, Lloyd George used his increased powers to centralise wartime production. As a result, British industry and commerce

were harnessed in support of Britain's military forces.

The wheels of government turned smoothly for Lloyd George on the home front, but he was stymied in his efforts to influence Britain's battlefield strategy. Lloyd George had a deep-seated distrust of generals, and they in turn regarded him as incompetent when it came to war strategy, disdaining his input.

Lloyd George favoured increasing British forces in alternate theatres, such as Italy and Greece, to avoid the heavy casualties incurred on the Western Front. For that reason, he objected to Commander-in-Chief Douglas Haig's plans for a major offensive in summer 1917. Haig and Chief of the Imperial General Staff William Robertson would not take his advice. Lloyd George reluctantly agreed to allow Haig to proceed with the Third Battle of Ypres. After the armistice, Lloyd George served as the senior member of Britain's delegation to the Paris Peace Conference.

Erich Ludendorff

Nationality German
Position Quartermaster General

Erich Ludendorff masterminded German's strategy of total war, unleashing a powerful offensive in spring 1918 in an attempt to achieve a victory on the Western Front

Overbearing, belligerent, and arrogant, Erich Ludendorff waged internal war against his rivals in the German army with the same vigour that he waged war against Germany's foes in World War I.

Because of his deep knowledge of the Schlieffen Plan, Ludendorff was assigned to accompany the German Second Army as it swept into Belgium in 1914. He won early fame when he compelled the Liege citadel to surrender.

The German supreme command then appointed him to serve as chief of staff to General Paul von Hindenburg, who they recalled from retirement to stave off disaster on the Eastern Front. Ludendorff aided Hindenburg in reversing the situation by defeating the Russians at Tannenberg in late August.

Ludendorff clashed repeatedly with German Chief of the General Staff Erich von Falkenhayn. Each had his own idea of how to prosecute the war, and the two ideas did not mesh. Ludendorff unsuccessfully tried to get Kaiser Wilhelm to sack Falkenhayn. When that failed, Ludendorff went around the Kaiser and convinced politicians and industrialists to call for Falkenhayn's resignation. This effort succeeded, and Falkenhayn was fired in August 1916.

Hindenburg and Ludendorff became virtual dictators of Germany in the second half of the war. They embarked on a policy of total war, which brought the Americans into the war tipping the balance in the Allies' favour.

Ludendorff directed the series of attacks in 1918 known as Kaiserschlacht, the Spring Offensive, which targeted the British and Portuguese expeditionary forces in the Flanders Sector. The French reinforced the British, but not before the Germans had driven the Allies to the Marne. Allied counterattacks led to an armistice.

After the war, Ludendorff did Germany the disservice of circulating the so-called 'stabbed in the back' theory that German was defeated by villainous traitors from within her borders rather than on the battlefield.



Erich Ludendorff (at right) holds a map as he confers with Eighth Army commander Paul von Hindenburg at the Battle of Tannenberg in 1914



Aleksei Brusilov

Nationality Russian

Position Commander-in-chief, Russian Provisional Government

Brusilov led a Russian offensive that was a spectacular success against Austria-Hungary showing that it was possible to capture territory without appalling casualties

Russian General Aleksei Brusilov showed great promise at the outset of the war while leading the Russian Eighth Army on the Eastern Front. His army penetrated the Austro-Hungarian frontier positions in Galicia, outstripping the progress of other Russian armies. For this achievement, Tsar Nicholas II promoted Brusilov to four-star general in 1915, and he was given command of the Southwest Army Group.

When the Russian northern armies were getting ready to launch an offensive against Germany in summer 1916 to coincide with the Somme Offensive on the Western Front, Brusilov volunteered to lead his forces in a simultaneous attack. The Russian general staff gave him permission to participate in the offensive.

Brusilov had studied the challenges presented by trench warfare and devised a way that he believed he could overcome the difficulty of capturing and holding ground in trench warfare. Rather than mass all of his forces for a breakthrough in one small area as most commanders did, he planned a general attack along the entire length of the enemy's front. The goal was to stretch the enemy's defences to the breaking point.

Brusilov unleashed four Russian armies totalling 500,000 men against the Austro-Hungarian positions on June 4, 1916. The well-led Russians overran the enemy's frontline trenches. By the end of the first week, Brusilov's troops had in some places penetrated 40 miles from their starting point.

When the offensive was over in September, Brusilov's Russians had inflicted 600,000 casualties on the Austro-Hungarian army, and compelled another 400,000 to surrender. The Brusilov Offensive, as it became known, resulted in a leadership crisis for the Austro-Hungarian army. After the debacle, the Germans took control of the Austro-Hungarian army.

In March 1917, Brusilov was appointed commander-in-chief of the Provisional Government that replaced the failed Tsarist regime.

General Aleksei Brusilov restored Russian honour following the defeats of 1914 with a successful offensive two years later that bears his name



Ferdinand Foch

Nationality French

Position Supreme Allied Commander

Ferdinand Foch was a master commander with extensive experience in front-line fighting who rose to the position of supreme commander on the Western Front

Field Marshal Ferdinand Foch rose steadily up the ladder of command. He started the war as a corps commander and before the war was over he became supreme allied commander. Foch's strengths far outweighed his weaknesses and that had much to do with his success at the upper echelons of command.

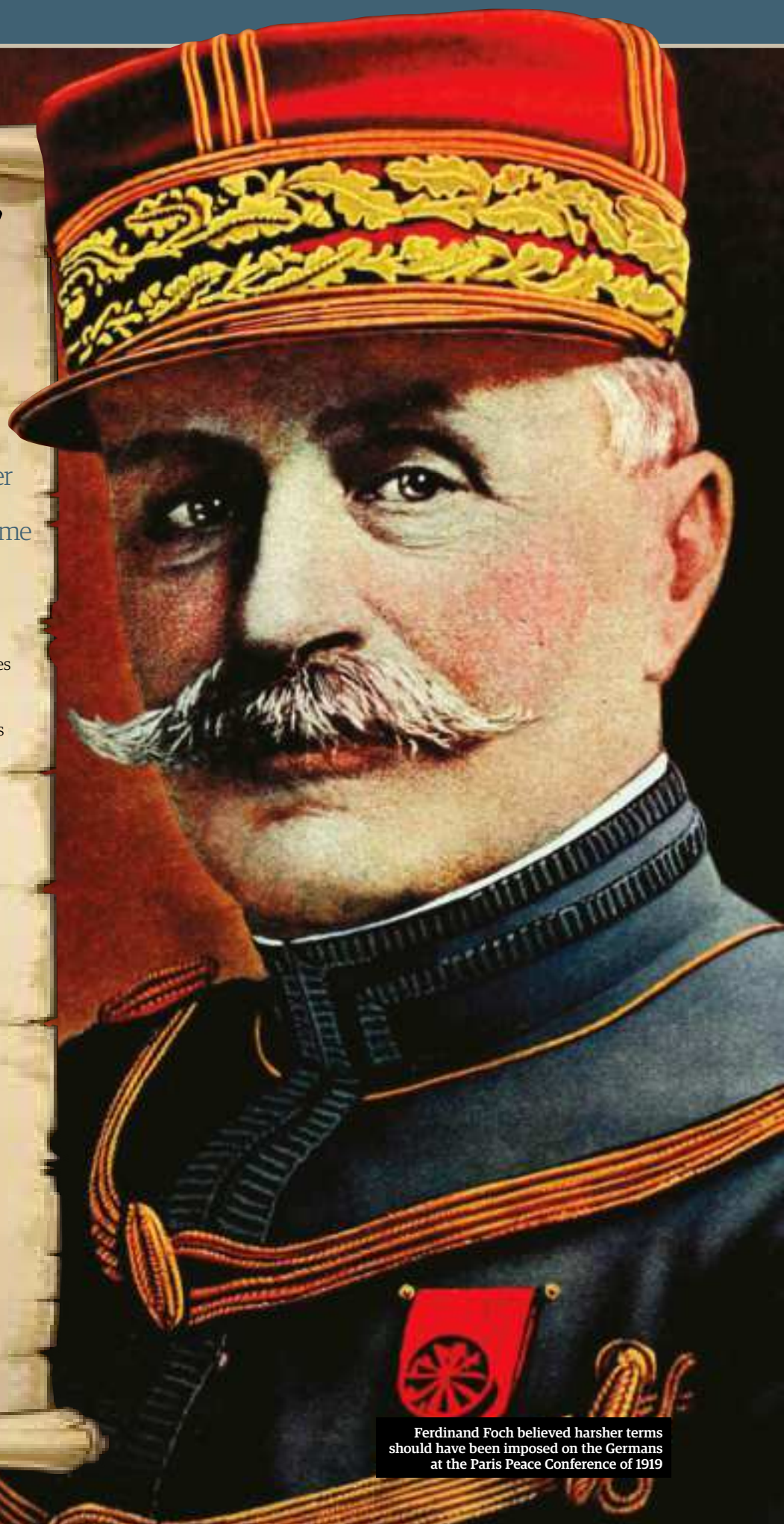
Soldiers and fellow generals admired him because he was a fighter at heart, with plenty of fire in his belly. He proved on multiple occasions throughout the war that he was a master of the counterattack. He was optimistic, diplomatic, and inspiring.

French Generalissimo Joseph Joffre took Foch under his wing, and during that time he rose to command of the French Northern Army Group in 1915. During the Somme Offensive of 1916, his troops advanced further than the British. Horrified by the staggering casualties of the offensives on the Western Front, he advocated so-called scientific warfare that relied on new technologies, such as tanks, to help offset high casualties among front-line forces.

Foch's career suffered a key setback in December 1916 when General Robert Nivelle replaced Joffre. While Nivelle was in power, Foch languished in small roles. But he returned to the limelight when General Philippe Petain replaced the incompetent Nivelle in May 1917.

From there, Foch rocketed into the stratosphere. He led reinforcements into Italy to shore up the sagging Italian front following the German victory at Caporetto in late 1917. Afterwards, Foch was promoted to supreme allied commander in March 1918, which put him above all other generals on the Western Front.

As supreme Allied commander, he set the strategic goals for the Allies in the West and directed national armies to parry each blow of the enemy. During this time, he used his diplomatic chops to reign in the headstrong American General John J Pershing. At the end of the war, Foch negotiated harsh terms for Germany. After four long years fighting the Germans, he was in no mood to be merciful.



Ferdinand Foch believed harsher terms should have been imposed on the Germans at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919

John J Pershing

Nationality American

Position General of the Armies of the United States

Pershing sought autonomy for the American forces on the Western Front and lead a major offensive

US President Woodrow Wilson believed Major General John 'Black Jack' Pershing had the right stuff to lead the American Expeditionary Force to France. He was a trustworthy general, an excellent administrator, and a superb combat commander.

Pershing insisted that his troops fight as an autonomous US national army as opposed to being divided up as reinforcements for the French and British armies. The first Doughboys, as the allies called the US soldiers, arrived in France in June 1917. To put Pershing on par with the other national commanders, the US Army promoted him to full general three months later. The American units, which had to undergo rigorous training before they would be ready for the cauldron of battle, were held in reserve until fully trained.

The fury of the Kaiserschlacht compelled Pershing agree to allow individual US divisions to go into battle piecemeal to prevent the Germans from achieving a breakthrough on the Western Front. By then, Pershing had four US divisions ready. Pershing's Doughboys proved they were superb soldiers in a series of battles in the summer of 1917, which included Cantigny, Belleau Wood, and Château-Thierry.

Foch allowed Pershing to lead his entire army in an independent attack against the German 5th Army in September 1918 in what became known as the Saint-Mihiel Offensive. The Americans fought alongside the French in the Meuse-Argonne offensive suffering heavy casualties.

Pershing believed that unless the German civilians experienced the horror of war first-hand on their own soil, they would not be sufficiently cowed. He favoured unconditional surrender and an invasion of Germany if necessary to achieve that goal. Because of his obduracy, he was excluded from the Paris Peace Conference.



Pershing (right) and Supreme Allied Commander Ferdinand Foch clashed repeatedly over how the Americans would be used in battle on the Western Front



President Woodrow Wilson unveiled in a January 1918 address to a joint session of the US Congress his Fourteen Points for a new European order

Woodrow Wilson

Nationality American **Position** President

Woodrow Wilson marshalled US resources in support of the Doughboys, but ran into difficulties trying to get his idealistic principles adopted at the peace table

"The present German submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against mankind," US President Woodrow Wilson said in his War Message to the US Congress on 2 April 1917.

When German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg announced less than three months earlier that Germany would pursue a policy of unrestricted submarine warfare, Wilson saw it was time to end American neutrality. The German decision proved a costly mistake for it brought 4.5 million American soldiers and sailors into the war against Germany.

Once he made the decision to go to war against Germany, Wilson threw all his energy into defeating it on the Western Front. With the support of Congress, Wilson instituted compulsory military service, took control of war industries, and controlled the production and distribution of food.

Wilson did not behave like a team player, though, when it came to the United States' military strategy against the German

Empire. Specifically, he never agreed to a joint plan with Britain, France, and Italy.

Wilson was an optimist and a visionary. He had a burning desire to shape the post-war world. Wilson set forth his vision in the form of the famous Fourteen Points, a statement of principles that he published in January 1918.

The Germans naively thought that they might achieve leniency from Wilson because of his espousal of fairness, but they were wrong. Wilson deeply despised German militarism, and he was not about to let the Germans remain a threat to European peace in the years to come.

The 1919 peace conference was marred by heated arguments over the provisions among the senior members of the delegations from France, Britain, Italy, and the United States. In the end, Wilson had to compromise, which meant abandoning many of his idealistic principles, but the conferees did adopt his proposal for a League of Nations.

The Red Baron

Hunter, cold-eyed killer and World War I superstar - one man owned the airspace above the Western Front

"Brought up to see killing as a competitive sport, he spent every spare hour stalking wild animals across the mountains and forests of his family's sizeable Silesian estate"



21

April 1918 was a Sunday. At about 11am, Lieutenant Wilfrid May of the newly formed RAF found himself high above the shattered battlefields of the Somme. He was a long way from home. The 22-year-old from rural Canada would ordinarily be emerging from a stuffy church service at this time of the week, but here he was searching the blue skies of northern France for men to kill.

It was only May's second combat patrol. His first, the day before, had left his commanding officer (CO) Captain Roy Brown, who'd known May since high school, convinced that the inexperienced pilot wouldn't last long. If the patrol got into a fight that morning, Brown strictly told May, he was to keep out of it. At the age of 25, Brown was a veteran well versed in the dangers of aerial combat. He also knew May's mother quite well, and had no desire to send her a letter of condolence. Soon after

entering German airspace, the RAF patrol was attacked by the brilliantly painted planes of The Red Baron's Flying Circus. Initially, May obeyed orders, obediently circling high above the battle, until he glimpsed a solitary German triplane below, also apparently avoiding the fray. It was an easy target and the opportunity for glory too great to resist. As he pushed his joystick forward and dived towards destiny, May didn't know that he was about to attack Wolfram von Richthofen, the cousin of the deadliest airman of his age - Manfred von Richthofen - who would soon be on his tail.

Manfred von Richthofen was bred for war. Born into an aristocratic military family in Kleiburg, eastern Germany, on 2 May 1892, he was taught to hunt from an early age. Before he was out of his teens he'd become a very gifted marksman and skilled hunter. Brought up to see killing as a competitive sport, Manfred spent every spare hour stalking wild animals across the mountains and forests of his family's sizeable Silesian estate. Hunting would remain a life-long obsession for him.

Aged 11, Richthofen's father sent him away to Wahlstatt Cadet College. Here, his formal military training began, carving a narrow educational route into adulthood. Through endless drill, classroom instruction and corporal punishment, the self-sacrifice required of a warrior-servant to the Kaiser was hammered into him.

Eight years later, when Richthofen emerged from the Royal Military Academy at Lichterfelde, he'd evolved from a boy hunter into a heel-clicking cavalry officer steeped in German militarism. His martial skill, self-discipline, extreme sense of duty and total self-belief added up make to an individual perfectly programmed for war.

However, when war broke out in 1914, the 22-year-old discovered that his role was all but redundant. The advent of the machine gun had rendered mounted troops obsolete, and so the young soldier - aching for glory - began looking for other ways into the war. He soon found one via the intriguing new flying machines buzzing about above the freshly dug trenches.



In 1914, planes were only a decade old. Military commanders on both sides had serious doubts they could be put to any practical use, but as trench warfare mired the conflict into a stalemate, it was clear they could be used to spy on enemy lines from above. Traditionally, reconnaissance had been a cavalry role, and in May 1915, Richthofen got himself reassigned as observer with the German Flying Service on the Eastern front.

By now, aerial warfare was changing rapidly. In a few months it had gone from men in rickety contraptions attacking each other with bricks and pistols to purpose-built flying gun platforms. The Germans had led the way, and by July 1915 were ruling the skies with their Fokker Eindecker monoplanes. Effectively the world's first fighter aircraft, it came replete with a synchronised firing mechanism that enabled the pilot to shoot through his propeller without shooting it off. Competing with each other to "score the most kills," German pilots who managed a tally of five or more also acquired a flashy new sobriquet - überkanonen, or top gun.

These aces, as they were known on the Allied side of the line, were Imperial Germany's posterboys. Their stories appeared in newspapers and their faces on cigarette cards all over the country. Girls wanted to marry them, boys wanted to be them. None was more famous than Oswald Boelcke, and it was Boelcke who, during a chance meeting with a besotted Richthofen on a train in 1915, convinced him that his future lay in flying.

Richthofen requested permission to retrain as a pilot. Not a naturally gifted pilot, he struggled through flight school. Despite crashing on his first solo flight, by Christmas 1915 he'd won his wings. Rather than being assigned to a fighter squadron, however, Richthofen found himself flying bombers (another recent development) until Boelcke once again stepped in.



The Red Baron's squadron Jagdstaffel 11. Manfred sits in his Albatross bi-plane, while his brother Lothar sits on the ground

CAVALRY RECON OF WORLD WAR I

Richthofen's war started not in the air but on horseback

After completing military training, Richthofen was commissioned into the 1st Regiment of Uhlans - lancers who specialised in reconnaissance. It was a good fit for the dashing young baron. For hundreds of years the cavalry had enjoyed high status in European armies, and he was almost as keen a horseman as he was a hunter.

When World War I broke out, Richthofen was garrisoned in Ostrowo, eastern Germany, and a few days into the conflict led a reconnaissance patrol into enemy territory. He spent several days behind Russian lines and, after narrowly avoiding a confrontation with mounted Cossacks, withdrew. On his return, he discovered that his garrison commander had been wrongly informed of his fate. Richthofen was forced

to send a telegram home reassuring his parents that he wasn't dead.

The next day, he was dispatched to the Western Front. Here, on 21 August, his troop charged a French position near Virton in Belgium, only to be cut down by machine guns. The incident proved what Richthofen had suspected for some time - that cavalry was redundant on the modern battlefield. Soon after he found himself undertaking supply duties far from the Front. It was a role he endured for several months until he wrote a letter to his commanding officer requesting reassignment to the Flying Service. "My dear excellency!" his letter opened, "I have not gone to war to collect cheese and eggs..." He was transferred almost immediately.



With its barbed wire and machine guns, World War I ended the 2,000-year-old dominance of cavalry on European battlefields

Rise of the Jastas and the Flying Circus

With the advancement of the plane as a weapon came the need for new and innovative tactics

At the outbreak of World War I, Germany's air force was all but nonexistent. Over time, however, events on the ground and technological advances in the air helped shape both its structure and role.

With a war on two fronts, Germany fought defensively, particularly in the west, for most of the conflict. When it came to air supremacy, therefore, the emphasis focused on developing fighter planes whose job it was to stay behind their own lines, protecting German airspace from incursion by enemy bombers and reconnaissance aircraft. This gave the nascent German Flying Service an edge for great chunks of the war in two ways. First, their aircraft flew fewer miles so could stay airborne for longer. Second, their job - like the RAF's in 1940 - was to defend the air and not attack the ground, so their aircraft tended to be lighter and faster.

With a clear role defined by 1915, different German aircraft began to appear that could carry out this task - initially in the shape of the Fokker Eindecker, then the various iterations of the Albatross biplane, and finally the flawed Fokker Dr1. Theories about how these new flying weapons might best be used also evolved over time.

By the summer of 1916, Germany's leading ace Oswald Boelcke organised a prototype squadron of aerial hunters. Jagdstaffel 2 - or Jasta 2 - which started life as a mongrel group of flyers in a mixed bag of planes. Under Boelcke's guidance, however, and once equipped with Albatrosses, Jasta 2 became a prototype for success. Typically manned by 12-16 pilots, a Jasta - or squadron - would hunt in formation, and by April 1917, with 37 fully operational Jastas on the Western Front, the Germans had established total, albeit temporary, control of their own airspace.

This initial success bore Jagdgeschwader 1 - a four-squadron formation created in the summer of 1917. Nicknamed the Flying Circus, it established itself as the most-feared air unit of World War I and set a precedent for future terror. Richthofen was its first Great War leader, while Hermann Goering - who'd go on to lead the Nazi Luftwaffe in the next war - was its last.



The Flying Circus was the world's first-ever fighter wing. Many of the tactics and techniques it pioneered are still used today

EARLY ACES Richthofen wasn't Germany's first top gun, or its last



Max Immelmann

The first German ace of the war was South African-born Immelmann, who won the Pour Le Merite - at the time Germany's highest decoration. He claimed 17 victories before being killed in June 1916. He's best remembered for inventing the Immelmann Turn - a loop-and-roll dogfight manoeuvre still used today.



Oswald Boelcke

Pour Le Merite-winner Boelcke claimed 40 kills before losing his life in a mid-air collision in October 1916. He left behind a legacy of tactics and techniques that are still taught to modern fighter pilots. Boelcke's death had a particularly profound affect on Richthofen, who idolised him.



Hermann Goering

Hitler's future right-hand man was appointed the Flying Circus's CO after Richthofen's death. He ended the war with 22 kills and a Pour Le Merite. During his time with the outfit, he befriended Richthofen's cousin, Wolfram. The pair would go on to work closely together after the war.

The tactics of fight & flight

Richthofen was a great hunter in the sky, but he utilised two key principles to gain the edge on his opponents

MANOEUVRE

Max Immelmann was Germany's first great pioneering fighter pilot. As well as becoming the country's first top gun, he also bequeathed later pilots, like Richthofen, his famous Immelmann Turn. This manoeuvre cleverly repositioned a fighter aircraft after an initial attack. After making a high-speed dive from height, German pilots would then pull back on their stick, climb vertically until their engine was on the verge of a stall, then loop round into another dive. At the top of the loop they'd then roll their aircraft so it was the right way up as it began its next attacking dive.

FORMATION

In the popular imagination, the Red Baron was an acrobatic flyer and reckless daredevil, but in reality he was neither. A pilot of limited ability, he was risk averse, and with the exception of his final flight, someone who remained extraordinarily calm in combat.

For the most part, he employed a simple strategy invented by his mentor Oswald Boelcke. Flying at the point of an arrow formation, Richthofen would attack from height with the Sun behind him. This gave him height, speed and visual advantage over his enemy, while his squadron, gathered around him, protected his flanks and rear.

THE OTHER RICHTHOFENS

Manfred may be the most celebrated Richthofen, but his relatives also made famous - and infamous - contributions to history



Wolfram Freiherr von Richthofen

Like his more-famous cousin Manfred von Richthofen, Wolfram started the war in a cavalry unit. After seeing action on both the Western and Eastern Front, and earning an Iron Cross for bravery, he found himself practically redundant by 1915.

In 1917, he followed Manfred and Lothar into the Flying Service and by 1918 was a trained fighter pilot. Assigned to the Red Baron's Flying Circus, he was lucky not to be killed on his first combat patrol, during which his cousin was killed. He survived the war and achieved top-gun status with eight confirmed kills.

Wolfram left the services after the war and studied for a doctorate in

aeronautical engineering, qualifying in 1929. His doctoral thesis was a top-secret study on production techniques for building all-metal aircraft, a new innovation.

A keen admirer of Hitler, Wolfram was appointed chief of aircraft production for the Luftwaffe when the Nazis came to power in 1933. He then commanded the Condor Legion during the Spanish Civil War - overseeing its infamous bombing of Guernica - and became a field marshal of the Luftwaffe. Serving at the highest level throughout World War II, he was captured by American troops in 1945, dying shortly afterwards of natural causes.



Lothar von Richthofen

The past will always remember Lothar von Richthofen as the Red Baron's kid brother, but in many ways he more closely resembled the swaggering daredevil that his older sibling's legend represents. Although he had a similar upbringing to Manfred, he couldn't have been more different. Standing at well over six feet tall, he not only towered over his considerably smaller brother, but had a bigger personality to match.

Manfred was often described as detached, humourless and aloof - particularly as the war progressed - a man who seemed to live a celibate, almost monk-like existence. In contrast, Lothar was a fun-loving extrovert who proved to be far more impulsive in the air.

Although Manfred scored more kills, Lothar - who had considerably less air time due partly to long periods of

convalescence - notched them up quicker. By the end of the war, he'd earned 40 kills despite having only been an active fighter pilot for about eight months. Brought down four times, he spent more time in the hospital than he did in the air. He survived the war but was killed in a flying accident in 1922, aged 27.

"By the end of the war, he'd earned 40 kills despite having only been an active fighter pilot for about eight months"

In August 1916, Boelcke was scouring German airbases on the Eastern Front for pilots to join his newly formed fighter squadron the Jagdstaffel - literally 'hunting flight'. Only the best were selected, and by the time Boelcke returned to France, 23-year-old Manfred von Richthofen was sitting next to him.

As a young hunter in the wilds of Silesia, Richthofen had been encouraged to collect trophies of his kills. In his bedroom as a boy, stuffed heads of the animals he'd shot stared lifelessly down at him from every wall as he slept or played. It was a macabre practice that he carried over into his adult life - a life from here on in that would involve hunting humans.

In September 1916, while on his maiden mission with Boelcke, Richthofen claimed his first confirmed kill. After shooting down a British plane, he landed next to its wreckage and sliced the serial number from the skin of its fuselage with a hunting knife. Then, back at base, he ordered a silver cup from a jewellers as a trophy. It was a ritual he continued throughout the war - a cup for each plane and, whenever possible, a strip of canvas hacked from his dead prey's plane. These strips of canvas decorated the walls of his quarters - a gruesome reminder of the dozens that he'd killed.

Although not a great flyer, Richthofen was a predator par excellence, while the plane he did most of his killing from was, for a while at least, technologically superior to anything else in the skies. By late 1916, the Fokker Eindecker was being replaced by the Albatross biplane. Its 170-horsepower engine gave it enough power to carry not one but two synchronised machine guns, while its rigid fuselage meant its aerodynamics offered a unique edge in the aerial duels that the flyers were now calling dogfights.

Richthofen's other great advantage was Boelcke's brain. Known as the father of fighter tactics, Boelcke had developed a set of principles for surviving dogfights known as Boelcke's Dicta, which included such gems as "attack from height" and "use the cover of the clouds and the glare of the Sun." He also warned his flyers that "foolish acts of bravery" would get them killed.

Something Boelcke couldn't legislate for, however, was aerial accidents, and on 28 October 1916, he was killed in a mid-air collision during a chaotic dogfight over Northern France with some British pilots.

A month after Boelcke's funeral, Richthofen claimed his 11th kill - it was one that was to change his life. The shooting down of

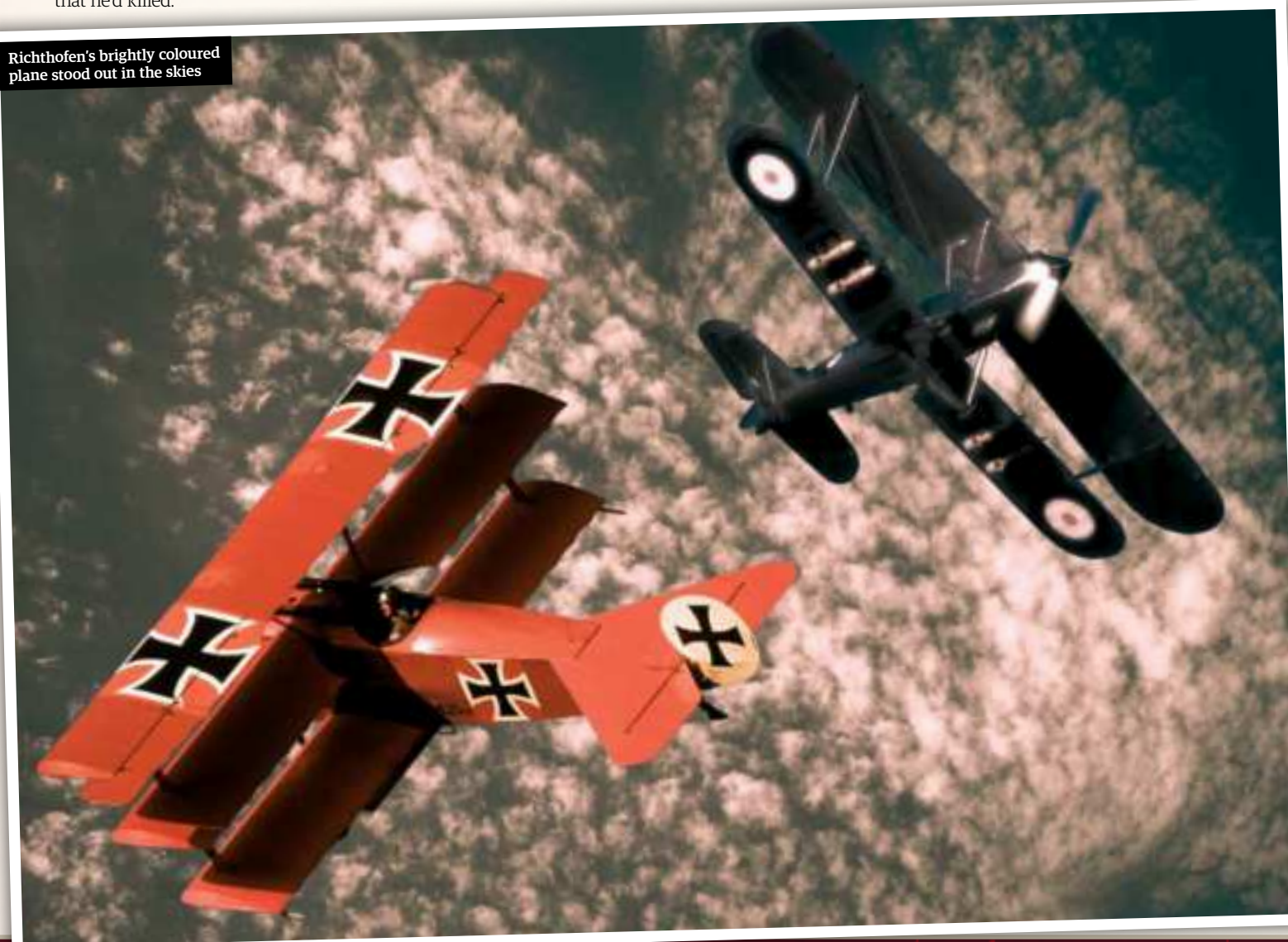
Britain's leading ace Major Lanoe Hawker VC in November 1916 elevated Richthofen to superstar status. With Boelcke gone, Imperial Germany's PR machine needed a new hero to dazzle its war-weary masses, and the young Prussian aristocrat got the job.

In January 1917, Richthofen claimed his 16th confirmed kill and became Germany's highest-scoring ace. Awarded the coveted Pour Le Mérite - a year to the day since Boelcke had received his - he was also given command of his own squadron - Jagdstaffel 11. He'd been a fighter pilot for less than six months.

He now intended to lead his new squadron much as Boelcke had done, but with one crucial difference. "One fine day," he wrote, "I came upon the idea of having my crate painted glaring red. The result was that absolutely everyone could not help but notice my red bird."

It was an audacious gesture, and Richthofen's men were rightfully concerned that his distinctive aircraft would make him an obvious target. They suggested painting all of their squadron's Albatrosses red, but Richthofen refused. They could customise their planes' liveries, he told them, but his plane alone would stalk the skies painted the colour of blood.

Richthofen's brightly coloured plane stood out in the skies





By April 1917, the skies were filled with Germany's new Albatross biplanes, and that month saw the British Royal Flying Corps suffer greater losses than in any other of the war. In four violent weeks, known as Bloody April, the corps lost 275 aircraft, a third of its entire force. Richthofen alone accounted for 21, taking his personal tally to 52, 12 past Boelcke.

The Red Baron, as the international press would soon call him, was ordered to go on leave. He spent his 25th birthday lunching with the kaiser and much of the rest of his time dictating his memoirs. The resulting book *The Red Battle Flyer* was so heavily edited by the authorities that Richthofen later distanced himself from it. His adoring public, however, swallowed every propagandised word and it became an instant best-seller.

In June 1917, Richthofen returned to the front as commander of Jagdgeschwader 1 - a new four-squadron fighter group. This new highly mobile force was allotted its own trains to transport it to different sectors of the front. Because it moved about on rails - as circuses of the day commonly did - it was dubbed the Flying Circus by the press, who by now were also portraying Richthofen and his men as chivalrous airborne knights who engaged their enemy in aerial jousts.

This was, of course, romantic nonsense. In reality, this new air war was mortal combat fought three miles above the ground in experimental machines. It wasn't chivalry that ensured survival, but stealth and cunning. The winner was the man who successfully sneaked up on his rival and was able to put a bullet in his back. It was very deadly work and it soon took its toll on Richthofen.

While on leave, the Baron had been shaken by the news that his younger brother Lothar, also a pilot, had been seriously wounded. Four months later it was Richthofen's turn to experience that



The Red Baron met his end while being chased by Captain Arthur Brown in a Sopwith Camel

fear. In July 1917, he was hit in the head during a routine dogfight. Temporarily blinded, he managed to land safely, but his injuries left him a psychological mess.

A living Red Baron, Germany's high command had long-since realised, was a powerful propaganda tool for the war. They insisted he stay on the ground, but Richthofen's indoctrination would never allow him to just safely sit out a conflict such as this. But then, he didn't have much appetite left for action anymore. "I'm in wretched spirits after every aerial combat," he lamented in his diary. "When I [land] again at the airfield I go directly to my room. I do not want to hear anyone or see anything. I believe that war is not how people at home imagine it... It is very grim."

Probably suffering from what today is called shell shock, Richthofen also had to cope with

a shift of power in the skies. The British and French had been developing new aircraft to compete with the Albatross, and in the Sopwith Camel bi-plane had found one to match it. Germany's response was the Fokker Dr1 Triplane. Although faster and more agile than the Albatross, it was, however, fatally flawed. Poor visibility, handling difficulties and excess drag all made it a good plane to get killed in. By the end of 1917, the highly skilled Richthofen was the sole surviving member of the squadron Boelcke had raised the previous summer.

With his friends gone and afflicted by daily headaches due to his wounds, Richthofen responded in the only way he knew how. He retreated ever further into himself, and pushed himself ever harder. By 20 April 1918, he claimed his 80th scalp. However, it was to be the Red Baron's last.

THE BARON'S RIVALS

Many Allied airman hunted the skies for Richthofen in the hope of ending his reign of terror

Major Lanoe Hawker VC British



Hawker was the first Briton to achieve 'ace' status. He had seven credited victories when he encountered Richthofen on 23 November 1916. After a lengthy dogfight during which Richthofen fired 900 rounds, Hawker, running low on fuel, made a break for his own lines. Richthofen followed, and

after having to hit his jammed guns with a hammer to get them working again, fired one last burst at Hawker, blowing a hole in the back of his head.

Captain Albert Ball VC British



With 44 confirmed and 25 unconfirmed kills, Ball was, when he died, Britain's leading ace. Often hunting the skies as a 'lone wolf', he frequently took on multiple enemies at a time. On 7 May 1917, his flight jumped several planes of the Flying Circus. The Red Baron wasn't there that day, but his brother Lothar was, and

Ball shot the younger Richthofen down before being killed himself. The Red Baron described him as "by far the best English flying man."

Captain Roy Brown DSC Canadian



Brown is largely credited with finally bringing the Red Baron down, although it's more likely the German ace was killed by ground fire. He was an experienced leader who claimed ten confirmed kills - Richthofen being the last. Equally impressive was the fact that in just

over a year of leading men in aerial combat, he didn't lose a single pilot. Despite being badly injured in a crash in July 1918, he survived the war.



The British buried Richthofen with full military honours. In 1925, his body was disinterred and reburied in Berlin

The following day was a Sunday. Fog delayed takeoff, and as Richthofen waited to go up, he approached his newest recruit - his 22-year-old cousin Wolfram von Richthofen, who'd never flown in combat before. In the event of enemy contact today, he told him, he was to stay out of it. Observe, learn, by all means, but most importantly, survive.

When the mist lifted at about 10.30am, the Red Baron led his Flying Circus into the skies. Within half an hour, its pilots were fighting for their lives against a flight of Sopwith Camels over the Somme Valley. Wolfram watched the fray from a safe distance, little suspecting that there might be another rookie pilot in the air that day with similar orders. Orders that he'd choose to disobey.

On seeing May's Sopwith hurtling towards Wolfram's helpless triplane, Richthofen yanked his own plane around and set his sights on the man and plane that was trying to kill his cousin. When May's guns jammed in the dive, however, the young Canadian's courage evaporated and he turned and fled - with an outraged Richthofen giving furious chase.

"The first thing I knew I was being fired on from the rear," May recalled afterwards. "I noticed it was a red triplane but if I'd realised it was Richthofen I'd have passed out on the spot. I kept dodging and spinning from about 12,000 feet until I ran out of sky... Richthofen was firing at me the whole time."

As Richthofen pursued May, he broke every rule in Boelcke's Dicta. Lured out from his own lines at low level into an Australian-controlled sector, his plane attracted overwhelming ground fire. Worse still, the great hunter was now being hunted. On seeing what was unfolding, May's CO Captain Brown had dived to his rescue. Closing in behind Richthofen, he opened fire, just as bullets from the trenches also ripped through the Red Baron's plane.

Moments later, Richthofen was dead, hitting the ground with a bounce and a skid. Australian infantrymen rushed to examine the wrecked aircraft. Inside they found a small, young pilot still clinging to its controls who had been killed by a single bullet to the heart.

Nobody can be sure who killed Manfred von Richthofen. What is certain, though, is that his death ensured his immortality. If the futility of the slaughter in the trenches represented all that was bad about humanity, his intoxicating story in the skies embodied something better. With its high-altitude heroics, brightly painted planes and imagined chivalry, it offered something more hopeful than events on the ground.

Perhaps uniquely, his passing was commemorated by both sides. In Germany, the nation mourned, while the British buried him with full military honours marking his grave with a wreath that read: "Our gallant and worthy foe." Richthofen the man may have been dead, but his legend would chime on through history.

WAR IN NUMBERS

The Red Baron

80 ◀ The number of planes he shot down

The number of planes he shot down in a bi-plane ▶ **59**

123

79 ▲ The number of men he shot down

◀ The number of men he killed

The number of times he killed more than one man in a single day ▶ **14**

4 ◀ The highest number of kills he got in a single day

24

▲ The number of hours flight training going solo - and crashing!





15 THINGS

YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT

WOMEN

IN

WORLD WAR I

While the men were away fighting on the front line,
Britain's unsung heroes stood up to be counted



A typical British arms factory in 1915 providing ammunition to support the war effort

80 PER CENT OF WEAPONS USED BY THE BRITISH ARMY WERE MADE BY WOMEN

1 The war had a profound effect on a woman's role in the workplace. On the eve of the war, approximately 30 per cent of the nation's workforce was female and the majority worked in textile manufacture. This changed entirely as the war stepped up a gear and the need for munitions production increased drastically. It wasn't just shell production that boomed though. The number of women in the transport industry increased by a huge 555 per cent as women helped roll vehicles off the production line and into the warzones of World War I. Without this invaluable help, events such as the shell crisis of 1915 would surely have been worse and might even have happened again. The female input was so great that by 1917, 80 per cent of weapons used by the British Army had been made by Britain's new army of women workers.

EXPOSURE TO TNT COULD TURN THE WORKERS YELLOW

2 The munitions industry was big business, and workplace hazards only increased as the factories grew. One of the worst was the effect that explosive agent trinitrotoluene (TNT) had on anyone who worked with it. The explosive of choice for the British Army's cannons, TNT was produced in its droves. During its production, it was frequently handled by women who came to be known as 'canary girls', as exposure caused a condition called toxic jaundice that turned skin yellow. These workers had no protective clothing, and safety measures were often inadequate. Tragically, more than 400 women died from overexposure to TNT during the war. However, TNT wasn't the only danger. The lack of safety concerns and the handling of explosive materials was a dangerous mix, resulting in explosions in the factories. At Chilwell in Nottinghamshire, 134 people died in a blast that levelled the entire complex.



The creation of munitions was a dangerous task but essential for British artillery

FACTORY WORKERS WERE KNOWN AS 'MUNITIONETTES'

4 The Munitions of War Act was passed in 1915 to give David Lloyd George, then minister of munitions, complete power over the industry. For supply to meet demand, unskilled female workers were brought into the fold. The huge influx of women led to these 'munitionettes' joining trade unions in their thousands. The most famous was led by trade unionist and women's rights campaigner Mary MacArthur, and helped raise safety concerns as well as increase women's pay. Mothers, wives, sisters, daughters and even grandmothers filled the void in the industry left by the men. The days were long and the work was repetitive as women engaged in physically demanding labour. The days were made easier through social activities but there were some trade unions that were against women working, as they believed it would lessen male wages after the war. Despite protests, it was obvious - the British workplace was changing for the better.



The WLA was such a success that it was pressed into action once again during World War II

THE WOMEN'S LAND ARMY HELPED SAVE BRITAIN FROM FAMINE

3 As Germany threatened Britain's supremacy on the seas, starvation through a naval blockade became a dangerous possibility. To last out the war, Britain had to become more self-sufficient. The Board of Agriculture set up the Women's Land Army (WLA) in 1915, employing women to work the land, drive tractors, and plough and drain fields. The working week could be up to 50 hours long and each worker was paid £1.12 per week. After a poor harvest and destruction of supply vessels by German U-boats in 1917, famine loomed as Britain was down to its last three weeks of food reserves. However, starvation was averted and rationing was introduced in London in early 1918. More than 200,000 women were working on the land by 1918, as the WLA continued to help stave off the possibility of famine.



By 1918, the average female wage in the munitions industry was £2 and two shillings. This was less than half the £4 and six shillings men were paid



In addition to the women working in governmental departments, 500,000 took up clerical positions in offices

200,000 WOMEN TOOK UP JOBS IN GOVERNMENT

5 Britain's new female workforce excelled themselves in the factories and out in the fields, but they also took jobs in government. Due to the lack of men, women were given the opportunity to work in jobs they would have previously been excluded from. High-up positions took women away from the monotonous work they were used to and helped them prove to politicians that they were worthy of the vote and equal rights. Things began slowly as the Liberal government only created a register for women to work in March 1915. 80,000 signed up immediately but there just wasn't enough work available. As a result, many took it upon themselves to find work, getting jobs as ambulance drivers, bus conductors and bank clerks. The female work force had started to mobilise.

A 1914 postcard showing how the government wanted suffragettes, Irish Nationalists and Unionists to put their political ideologies aside



On the front line

Just three of the army of British women who travelled with the men to fight for Britain

Edith Cavell

Perhaps the most famous nurse of the entire war, Edith Cavell is said to have helped more than 200 Allied soldiers escape from German-occupied Belgium into the neutral Netherlands. Cavell cared for soldiers on both sides, but was captured by German officials and shot by a firing squad in October 1915.



Flora Sandes

Just being a nurse wasn't enough for the headstrong Flora Sandes, who enlisted as a Serbian Army soldier. Leaving as soon as Austria-Hungary declared war, Sandes volunteered to work in an ambulance unit. Even when Serbia was invaded, she followed the new government-in-exile to Corfu as part of the Iron Regiment.



Evelina Haverfield

The former suffragette was described by Sylvia Pankhurst as "cold and proud". A determined and active WSPU member, upon the outbreak of the war Haverfield put all her energy into helping in the conflict. She founded the Women's Emergency Corps, which became influential in helping women become doctors, nurses and motorcycle messengers.



The war changed the outlook of the suffragist movement, and for once, Pankhurst and Fawcett were almost treading the same path

THE SUFFRAGETTES CHANGED TACK...

6 Emmeline Pankhurst and the suffragettes saw the war as an opportunity. By scaling down their own campaigning and focusing on helping the government, they would prove just how capable women could be. Active campaigning was used once in the 'Right to Serve' protest, but the remainder of the Women's Social and Political Union's (WSPU) energy was geared towards a patriotic stand against the threat of the Central Powers. The new direction caused a split in the WSPU. Emmeline and her daughter Christabel were staunch advocates of ending militant activity and supporting the war, but Christabel's sisters, Sylvia and Adela, weren't on the same page. Both pacifists, they made efforts to maintain peace, with Sylvia helping form the Women's Peace Army and Adela setting up the Australian branch of the organisation. The 1918 Representation of the People Act proved both strategies had been in some way successful.



...AND SO DID THE SUFFRAGISTS

7 Like the suffragettes, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) endured a split in its organisation. In February 1915, the NUWSS leader Millicent Fawcett realised that talks of peace were futile and decided not to support the Women's Peace Congress. This divided the organisation, with many women sticking to their pacifist guns. As the war raged on, Fawcett, taking a leaf out of the suffragettes' book, ensured the NUWSS

helped fund and set up women's hospital units in France, as well as helping form the Women's Emergency Corps and the Women's Volunteer Reserve. One action the group didn't take part in, though, was the White Feather Campaign, which actively persuaded men to join the armed forces. The NUWSS also carried on campaigning peacefully. It is without doubt that the hard work of the suffragettes and suffragists during the war was integral in the gaining of the vote for women.

PROPAGANDA TARGETED AND EXPLOITED WOMEN

8 Pro-war and anti-German posters were abundant in World War I, but propagandists also saw the benefit of including women in their work. Some appealed directly to women to encourage them to contribute to the war effort, but others used women as a tool to encourage more men to sign up to fight.



BRITISH WOMEN SERVED ON THE WESTERN FRONT AS NURSES AND SOLDIERS

9 The input of the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) and the Women's Hospital Corps (WHC) has been underrated. Members of these groups served as drivers and nurses, tending to the legions of men who were lying injured in field hospitals, often near to the front. These hospitals were founded and run by women in both France and Belgium, and the soldiers who went home were sent to the Endell Street Military Hospital in London, which treated a total of 26,000 patients and performed more than 7,000 major operations.

One woman actually enlisted in the army under the alias Denis Smith. Dorothy Lawrence only remained ten days in the ranks of a tunnelling company before she gave herself in after concerns for the company's safety. After interrogation, she was condescendingly thought to have been a 'camp follower', or prostitute. As well as on the Western Front, many British women joined the fight as far afield as Serbia and Russia in order to serve.



Dorothy Lawrence convinced everyone that she was a male Tommy reporting for duty



The role of women in the armed forces only grew as time wore on but sadly many of the service records were destroyed by German bombing in 1940

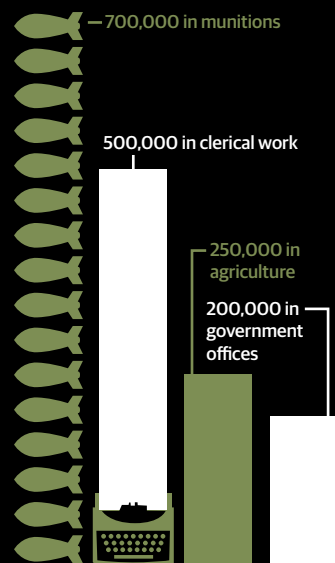
A FEMALE AUXILIARY CORPS WAS SET UP

10 Not everyone was like Dorothy Lawrence and joined up with the male rank and file. The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) only began in 1917 but quickly proved itself to be an effective wartime organisation. Recommended by Lieutenant-General H Lawson, far more women applied than anticipated and would be rewarded with a minimum pay of 24 shillings a week. It was structured into four units: Cookery, Mechanical, Clerical and Miscellaneous. The

influx took the pressure off men performing 'soft jobs' in the army and allowed them to fight on the front while women worked behind the lines. A total of 57,000 women served in the corps but, despite its success, there was still resistance to the WAAC. British newspapers falsely claimed that large numbers of women were pregnant through relationships with soldiers, even though an official investigation found this to be grossly exaggerated. The WAAC was disbanded in 1921 but restarted again as the Auxiliary Territorial Service in World War II.



IN NUMBERS



Where women worked in World War I

100,000

women joined the armed forces during the course of the war

5 MILLION

women were in employment in 1918

54,000

spectators attended the 1920 munitionettes cup final at Goodison Park, the home of Everton FC

12 MILLION

letters were sent by British women to the front line

FEMALE VOLUNTEERS TAUGHT MEN HOW TO USE FIREARMS

11

The Women's Defence Relief Corps consisted of two divisions, the civil section and the lesser-known semi-military section.

The latter division gave women

the chance to undergo drills, marching and signalling as well as instruction in the use of firearms. This training in military values did much for the White Feather Campaign and helped convince men to join up for the fight. The Local Defence Volunteers (LDV) were the predecessors of the Home Guard in World War II. The organisation employed women to help men train to fire weapons. Additionally, the Bolton War Hospital Supply Depot represented another way women could contribute to the war from back home. More than 20,000 packages were sent to men on the front from this one depot alone as women did their best to make life easier for their husbands away at war.



It is believed that 38,000 women worked as nurses, ambulance drivers and cooks on both the Home and Western fronts

THE FIRST POLICEWOMEN WENT ON THE BEAT

13

Originally known as Women's Patrols, the first female police officers helped maintain discipline and monitor workplace

behaviour while war raged in Europe.

They were mainly found in factories, but the force also worked in public areas such as railway stations, parks, cinemas and pubs. Despite being part of the police, these officers didn't have the power to arrest and could only present evidence in court on behalf of a male officer. Margaret Dahmer Dawson and Mary Sophia Allen were instrumental in the formation of the Women's Police Volunteers. Taking the mantle from the National Union of Working Women, who had set up 5,000 voluntary patrols, the group soon morphed into the Women's Police Service and were put on duty in all major cities, adopting short haircuts and an army-like hierarchy.

Women found an extra outlet for their cause by joining trade unions en masse



BRITAIN'S FIRST FEMALE-LED STRIKE TOOK PLACE

12

Women's trade union membership increased dramatically during the war; there was a 160 per cent rise in female members. The

unions that benefited most were the National Federation of Women Workers and the Worker's Union (WU). By 1918, the WU had 20 full-time female officials and a female membership of more than 80,000 - a quarter of the union's

entire membership. A few months before the end of the war, female workers on London buses and trams led a strike, demanding equal pay - the first in the UK to be initiated and won by women. The strike spread to the Underground and other towns across the country. This showed the power women could wield when part of an organisation, and was a total departure from the pre-war years, when 90 per cent of women weren't part of a union.



Officers being inspected by Mary Sophia Allen, one of the key figures in the Women's Police Volunteers

SINGLE WOMEN FOUND THEMSELVES AT AN ADVANTAGE AFTER THE WAR

14

The loss of 750,000 British men in the war had a drastic effect on the lives of British women. Newspapers printed stories of a so-called 'surplus of women' that would never find husbands after the high wartime casualties. However, remaining single did have its benefits. After the war, single women had much better job prospects than married ones. A wife who saw her husband return home would most likely have to nurse him back to health, which could hamper her chances of finding work. Some professions, such as teaching, only allowed single women to apply. The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919 helped end this, but only one in ten married women were in work by the 1930s.



Married women struggled to find work in peacetime more so than their single counterparts

A global revolution

It wasn't just British women who did their country proud in the Great War

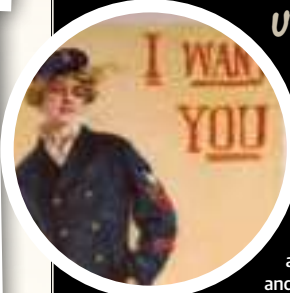
Germany

Just like Britain, Germany found itself in need of a labour force as men were put forward onto the Western and Eastern fronts. Food blockades by the Allied forces just made things worse for the families left at home without a husband or a father. Youth and female employment increased drastically to provide the men with munitions. After the war, children and teenagers benefited more than women as they began to rely less on their parents and could find work more easily in the interwar period. Society stood still for women, however, who were still treated as inferior to men in the workplace.



USA

World War I saw the employment of 3 million women in the food, textile and war industries in the USA. With the men abroad, American women took jobs as streetcar conductors and radio operators, and kept the factories up and running. Firms that usually specialised in car production or clothing were converted into tank and uniform factories respectively. Additionally, 11,000 women served abroad as nurses. World War I was the first war to officially allow women to serve. The navy in particular was struggling to cope with demand, and the Naval act of 1916 allowed women to sign up and serve as 'Yeomen'.



Russia

Going further than any other country, Russia mobilised women within the army. By 1917, segregated units were created by the tsar in an effort to win the war and turn the social and political tide. These female soldiers became media celebrities in their home country. The infamous Women's Death Battalion was created by Maria Bochkareva and went on to fight in the trenches of the Austro-Hungarian front after the men had abandoned it. The battalion even went as far as defending the Winter Palace in Petrograd from Bolshevik forces. Because of this, they are sparsely mentioned in the history of the USSR.



Dick, Kerr Ladies FC pictured in 1921 shortly before the Football Association's ban

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL KICKED OFF

15

As women started to work together in large numbers, social and sporting events began to spring up. Of all the social gatherings, football was the pastime that really became popular. Factory bosses actively encouraged sport, as it improved the workers' health and wellbeing. The friendly activity soon turned into competition, and several teams were formed. One of the most famous teams was Dick, Kerr's Ladies FC, who played in Preston. Formed in

1917, the club drew a crowd of 10,000 people for their first match. Later that year, the Munitionettes cup was won by Blyth Spartans, with striker Bella Reay scoring a hat-trick. The women's game reached a peak when 54,000 spectators crammed into Goodison Park on Boxing Day 1920. Sadly, women's football was banned in 1921, as it was expected that women would return to the household. Despite its wartime popularity, women's football would not officially return until the ban was lifted 50 years later, in 1971.



ARMY

The AFTERMATH

At the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month in 1918 the guns fell silent across the Western Front, and World War I was officially over - however, far from ending all wars, many overlooked conflicts continued to rage across the globe



own through the generations, the familiar story told of the Great War is retold time and time again. Unfortunately, the neat, happy ending of World

War I was anything but for people all over the world. Across Eastern Europe and the Middle East fighting continued, on and off, into the 1920s, as actors on the ground sought to either enforce the political agreements made at the end of the war, or to overturn or influence decisions they felt were unfavourable to them. Here, we look at a handful of conflicts in the

post-war period, reminding us that the end of one war too often simply sets the scene for the next one.

When WWI ended, the armed forces of most belligerent countries were still scattered all over Europe and in parts of the Middle East and Africa. Many of the German armies that had been left strewn across Eastern Europe and western Russia simply chose not to head home, but instead operated as independent armies pursuing their own political objectives. The West Russian Volunteer Army was one such unit. Nominally allowed to remain in the Baltic

after the war to carry on the fight against the Bolsheviks in Russia, this force chose to largely ignore this mandate and instead charted a more independent path.

Commanded officially by General Pavel Bermond-Avalov, a Cossack from Tiflis in Georgia, the West Russian Volunteer Army launched a campaign to secure an independent state or fiefdom of its own, briefly announcing the creation of a new West Russian state based in Riga, Latvia, and printing its own currency. The army quickly won fame after its initial successes in the Baltic and was frequently referred to

STICE



simply as 'the Bermontians' in honour of their warlord-like commander. The West Russian Volunteer Army did not last long, however. After successfully invading Latvia and occupying at least part of Riga, it was defeated and driven back, with the support both of British warships firing from Riga's harbour and reinforcements from Lithuania and Estonia aiding the Latvians.

However, there is more to this brief campaign than is at first obvious. Instead of an independent army of people from western Russia, as it presented itself, the West Russian Volunteer Army was in reality 80 per cent German (roughly

"The neat, happy ending of World War I was anything but for people all over the world"

40,000 Germans to 10,000 Russians and others). Its real commander was not even Bermond-Avalov, but was instead the German General Rüdiger von der Goltz, a relative of the famous Colmar von der Goltz who had spent much of his professional life working with and training

the Ottoman army, before dying of typhus in Baghdad in 1916. The much younger Rüdiger von der Goltz had been covertly tasked with securing a German foothold in the Baltic, and if possible reasserting German control over the newly independent Baltic states.



Men and women of the Red Army march to the front during the Polish-Soviet War. The Soviet counter-offensive threatened to extend the Red Army's control further into Europe

"The West Russian Volunteer Army was in reality 80 per cent German"

Ultimately he failed and was compelled to withdraw back to Germany, along with the other Freikorps, many of whom found themselves fighting in German streets in an undeclared civil war into the early 1920s. Von der Goltz was just one of a large number of actors scrambling for power, influence, and even state-building, in the chaos that engulfed Eastern Europe in the aftermath of World War I.

THE BRUTAL BIRTH OF THE USSR

When discussing conflicts that persist after World War I you have to start with the largest and probably the most influential of them all: the Russian Civil War. The start of the story is universally well known, but is far too often not told to completion. In March 1917 the February Revolution dethroned the Romanovs, and in their place was installed a Provisional Government. This continued to fight the Great War, despite a crumbling army infrastructure and a severely compromised command structure. The Provisional Government made one last desperate move with the Kerensky Offensive, named after Minister of War Alexander Kerensky, in July 1917. The result was a complete catastrophe.

Despite the offensive being led by General Aleksei Brusilov, who had won important

successes in 1916 in Galicia, the old Russian army simply could no longer function as a fighting force. The disastrous effects of General Order No. 1 (which took power, and even weapons, out of the hands of officers and put it in the hands of soldier collectives), along with the huge blow to morale that came with political chaos and uncertainty, had paralysed the Russian army and critically reduced its efficacy.

The failure of the Kerensky Offensive severely weakened the Provisional Government and increased the relative power and influence of more radical groups like Vladimir Lenin's Bolshevik Party, who launched their own revolution (the October Revolution) in November 1917. The communist Bolsheviks ousted the Provisional Government and handed power over to the soviets organised by workers, soldiers and peasants across Russia.

This is usually where the story ends for most people: the Bolsheviks are in control and it is a straight line from Lenin, through Stalin and Khrushchev, and on to the collapse of the USSR at the end of the Cold War. In reality, however, the Bolshevik capture of Saint Petersburg and Moscow left most of the rest of Russia in stark opposition to the revolution. Groups from all across Russia fought back against the Bolsheviks, broadly grouped into three categories: the Whites (a mix of largely independent armed forces, ranging from old Tsarist loyalists to armies of over a dozen external powers, including the British, Americans and Japanese); the Greens (peasants); and the Blacks (anarchists).

On paper the Bolsheviks (the Reds) were no match for the vastly larger and in many

"The Provisional Government made one last desperate move with the Kerensky Offensive, named after Minister of War Alexander Kerensky, in July 1917. The result was a catastrophe"

cases well-funded forces arrayed against them. They had a few key advantages, however, that eventually secured them victory. The Bolsheviks held a central position, in control of the two most important cities in the country and the surrounding countryside. This not only gave the Bolsheviks access to a relatively large population

of potential fighters but also, more importantly, gave them access to the best rail networks in the country. The Bolsheviks could exploit internal lines, meaning that if they needed to move troops from one front to another the distance they needed to travel was much shorter than the distance their opponents would have to move



The big players debate the future of the world in Paris, 1919

PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

Representatives from 32 different powers, great & small, gathered in Paris in 1919 to decide the fate of the world. Their success & failure is still debated

The Paris Peace Conference was the primary means by which politicians sought to reshape the world after the end of World War I. It was a chance for powers that felt they had been marginalised to assert their independence, and an opportunity for imperial powers to further extend their global influence. This fundamental contraction caused significant problems for many of the key geographical areas the diplomats in Paris needed to address. While many could agree to the basic justice of

United States President Woodrow Wilson's call for 'national self-determination', the actual implementation of this ideal - the creation of a bunch of new nation-states - was enormously complex. How would one determine new national borders? Was it to be based on where ethnic or linguistic populations happened to currently be living? This was enormously fraught due to the highly heterogeneous nature of places like Eastern Europe. These regions were far more ethnically heterogeneous in 1919 than in

the modern day - a result of multiple rounds of ethnic cleansing after World War I, again during World War II, and finally yet again in the aftermath of World War II. Should borders be based on historical analogue states? If so the borders of empires like Poland-Lithuania and other Eastern European states and empires were bound to overlap, forcing people on the ground to determine where borders should lie by force of arms. This ambiguity set the stage for the widespread violence after World War I officially ended.



across if they wanted to consolidate their forces. The access to good quality rail lines and rolling stock also meant that, despite being outnumbered, the Bolsheviks could generally muster local numerical superiority as and when needed. This was a major strategic advantage that acted as a significant 'force multiplier'.

Perhaps most important of all was the unity of the Bolshevik forces relative to their opponents. The White forces were an enormously heterogeneous combination of armies of wildly varying quality, with many divergent political goals. Nationalist forces in Poland and Ukraine sought to establish or expand their independence from Russia. Tsarist forces nominally fought for a return of the Tsarist monarchy, although more than a few monarchist leaders were really acting like medieval warlords fighting as much for their own power and prestige as anything else. International intervention forces had little stomach for any real fighting. Most of them having suffered enough in World War I, and generally failed to effectively coordinate with the dizzying array of Russian-led forces fighting the Bolsheviks (the comparison to Syria today is unavoidable).

"Despite being outnumbered, the Bolsheviks could generally muster local numerical superiority as and when needed"

Meanwhile, the Greens were poorly armed and poorly organised peasant armies often fighting simply for the preservation of their farmland and crops. The Greens, for all their bravery, were frequently misled by other armed forces. Bolshevik forces would on occasion raid peasant lands for food (the one thing the Bolsheviks were regularly in short supply of, being primarily an urban movement) loudly proclaiming themselves to be part of the Red Army. Other Bolsheviks would then later return to those same farms and villages and give some of the food back, proclaiming their largess to be done on behalf of the Bolsheviks, inviting cheers from the peasantry of 'Down with the Reds! Up with the Bolsheviks!'. If only they knew.

The Russian Civil War rumbled on for three years, until the Bolsheviks secured victory and the stabilisation of what would become the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics - the USSR. The fundamental geo-political paradigm of the 20th century, the global contest between communism and free market capitalism and democracy, thus began. The war did not end, however, before the fledgling Soviet state found itself in

The world at war

The end of WWI shifted the fight to smaller powers spread out across Europe & the Middle East

Polish-Soviet War

POLAND 1919 – 1921

One of a series of border-setting wars in Eastern Europe, the Polish-Soviet War was in many ways the most dramatic. Starting on the back of the Polish-Ukrainian War of 1919, which saw Poland successfully push its borders eastward while the diplomats in Paris were still debating the future of the world, the Polish-Soviet War nearly saw the Soviets create an Eastern Europe similar to the one that would exist after 1945. The introduction of French arms, including Renault FT-17 tanks (creating the first ever Polish armoured units), helped turn the tide of the war after initial Soviet successes, securing the survival of the Polish state, at least until 1939.



Russian artillery during the Polish-Soviet War, stationed near the Bug River

Irish War of Independence

IRELAND 1919 – 1921

Egyptian Revolution

EGYPT 1919

The Senussi War

SOUTHERN LIBYA 1914 – 1920

In 1914 the Senussi, a sect of Islam, declared jihad against the Europeans in the eastern Sahara. Fighting raged across Algeria, Tunisia, Chad, Niger, Sudan and Egypt before finally coming to a close in 1920

United States occupation of Haiti

HAITI 1915 – 1934

Russian Civil War

RUSSIA 1917 – 1922

By far the largest of the wars that carried on after the end of World War I. Vast numbers of men and armaments were arrayed across a conflict stretching from Eastern Europe all the way to Central Asia. At least 7 million combatants took part at one point or another, ranging from dozens of different nations, fighting for a wide range of different reasons. Some fought for independence and survival, others for fame, wealth and glory. Still others fought to carry on the work of the revolution and carry Marxist-Leninism into reality.



Admiral Kolchak, an important White Russian commander, reviews his troops in 1919



Mustafa Kemal Atatürk reviewing his troops before battle with the Greeks in western Anatolia

Turkish War of Independence

ANATOLIA, 1919 – 1923

The Ottoman Empire famously broke into the world of European politics in 1453 with the capture of Constantinople and the final extinguishing of the last, faint embers of the ancient Roman Empire. To find themselves reduced from a great empire that stretched across three continents to a tiny ethnic state in central and northern Anatolia in 1919 was unbearable and untenable. Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal the Turks would eventually reassert their status and geographical integrity in wars against the French, Italians and Greeks after the end of World War I.

Iraqi Revolt

IRAQ, MAY – OCTOBER 1920

The Ngolok rebellions

CHINA 1917 – 1949

Creation of Saudi Arabia

SAUDI ARABIA 1916 – 1930

Getting its start with the Arab Revolt in 1916, the House of Saud, like many other powerful families, jostled for power and influence in the region. It took a series of wars before they were able to unite the Najd and Hedjaz into the modern state of Saudi Arabia.

Amritsar Massacre

AMRITSAR, INDIA 1919

Franco-Syrian War

SYRIA, MARCH – JUNE 1920

Part of the broader fallout from the collapse of Ottoman supremacy in the Middle East, the Franco-Syrian War ensured French control over Syria, rather than control over the Arab king Faisal.



Henri Gouraud, left, surveys the fields of the Western Front. He would play a key role in extending French imperial control over Syria in 1920

"Some fought for independence and survival, others for fame, wealth and glory"



"The Treaty of Sèvres, signed in 1920, had not merely dismantled the old Ottoman Empire, it fundamentally reshaped the Middle East in ways that we are still dealing with today"



Vladimir Lenin giving a speech in Red Square, Moscow, on 25 May 1919. The speech was celebrating the first anniversary of the creation of Soviet armed forces

an unintentional war of conquest against an expansionist Poland. Newly independent Poland, like many of the other new states in Eastern Europe, recognised that the chaos that had erupted across the region was actually a fleeting opportunity to press territorial claims for a greater Poland, on par with the medieval powerhouse state of Poland-Lithuania that had dominated Eastern Europe and the Baltic five centuries earlier.

Seeing the apparent weakness of Russia, Polish forces marched east and hoped to extend their borders at Russia's expense. The fighting in this war, in some ways, pitted the war-fighting methods of modern, mass armies (for which the Soviets would become famous) with the more methodical, technology-obsessed war-fighting of the Western Front. Heavily supported with arms, munitions and even military leadership from a triumphant French army, the Polish forces

soundly defeated a Soviet counter-invasion that had very nearly wiped Poland off the map as quickly as it had reappeared. It would be one of the few times Poland was in a position to successfully repel Russian invaders.

TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

The situation just on the other side of the Black Sea was scarcely better. The Treaty of Sèvres, signed in 1920, had not merely dismantled the old Ottoman Empire - it fundamentally reshaped the Middle East in ways that we are still dealing with to this day. The Ottoman state, which had stretched from Spain, across North Africa, down the Arabian Peninsula, into the Balkans, and out to the borders of Persia, was reduced to a tiny rump state in central Anatolia. Gone was control of the Bosphorus, that most critical waterway for every



Camel cavalry in Syria, 1940. Troops like these were critical to waging war in the region, including back in World War I

power in the Black Sea region. Gone, also, was control of the southern Anatolian coast and access to the Mediterranean.

The east was given up to an independent Armenian state. Instead, land that had been in Ottoman possession since the Middle Ages was given over to international control (in the case

of the Bosphorus), or split between the French and the Italians (in the case of the southern coast). The Italians made the most significant push to assert their influence in Anatolia. Italian forces landed at Antalya, and for just a brief amount of time controlled a substantial swathe of territory hundreds of kilometres from the sea all along the southern coast of Anatolia.

Embarrassingly, Turkey even ceded land to the Greeks in western Anatolia. Citing the need to protect the sizable Greek population in and around the city of Smyrna, Greek forces landed at Smyrna in May 1919 and won the right, through the League of Nations, to operate a sort of protectorate over Smyrna and the surrounding lands for an undetermined length of time. Somehow unsatisfied with the first Greek expansion into Asia Minor in millennia, Greek forces pressed on, put together a capable army and invaded central Anatolia, vaguely marching towards Ankara, the capital of the new Turkish state.

The Greek plan, in the most generous reading, was unclear. It seems inconceivable that Greek forces could have effectively conquered and occupied a vast, interior country without easy access to the sea. Was their intention to conquer all of Anatolia, extending Greek influence into a region that was last truly Greek under the reign of Alexander the Great and his Seleucid progenitors?

In any event, the Greeks would come up against Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who put any Greek dreams of a return to imperial glory quickly in their place. Atatürk was an experienced military officer who had seen action in Libya in 1911 when, as a relatively junior officer, he snuck through the deserts of Egypt into Saharan Libya and organised a force of nomadic warriors to continually harry and harass the Italian invaders.

Atatürk was experienced in turning nothing into something, in building new, effective forces and leading them to perform far beyond what they would have been capable of otherwise. Within three years Atatürk and his armies had conquered back all of Anatolia, finally declaring victory after defeating the last of the Greek forces at Smyrna in 1922. The Treaty of Lausanne was quickly agreed upon and signed shortly after, in 1923, enshrining the modern Turkish borders we know today.

Similar jostling and fighting occurred across the Middle East in the period after the end of World War I. It is popular to point to landmark agreements like Sykes-Picot, or the mandate system established by the League of Nations, to imply that the borders of the Middle East were imposed by foreign (European) powers, with no input from the Arabs and others who actually



King Faisal (centre) with Lawrence of Arabia (second from right), advisors and his African slave at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919

“Middle Eastern, principally Arab, leaders across the region pressed their case and fought to assert their independence”

lived in the region. Nothing could be further from the truth. Middle Eastern, principally Arab, leaders across the region pressed their case and fought to assert their independence. Most famous of them was King Faisal of Syria and later Iraq. Faisal Ibn Hussein bin Ali al-Hashemi was born in Mecca to the grand sharif of Mecca in 1885. During World War I he became involved in the Arab Revolt, ultimately leading the Northern Army of the Arab rebels, fighting in Jordan and Syria. Throughout the war Faisal seemed to play each side off each other in his bid for personal power and influence. Faisal at different times nominally fought on behalf of his father's bid for a pan-Arab kingdom, at other times was happy to side more closely with the British, and on yet other occasions treated with the Ottomans in the hopes of being allowed to rule Syria as a vassal of the Empire.

With the end of the war and the political future of the Middle East still in question Faisal found himself proclaimed king of Syria in March 1920 by the Syrian National Committee. The very next month saw Syria handed over to France as a 'mandate' protectorate, leading to the brief Franco-Syrian war as both sides sought to assert their right to control the country. The war came to a climax on 24 July 1920 when French forces, under

the command of the venerated General Henri Gouraud, who had lost his right arm and half of his leg during the Dardanelles campaign, decisively defeated the Arab forces at the Battle of Maysalun.

French tanks formed up in the centre, flanked on either side by infantry, and advanced against the Arab camel cavalry. Initially the going was tough as Syrian artillery caused substantial problems for the French infantry (many of whom were West African tirailleurs sénégalais) and armour alike, but over time French artillery gained superiority and eventually decided the day. The Syrian line broke, their minister of war, Yusuf al-Azma, was killed, and the fleeing Syrians were harried by French aircraft, ensuring the finality of the rout.

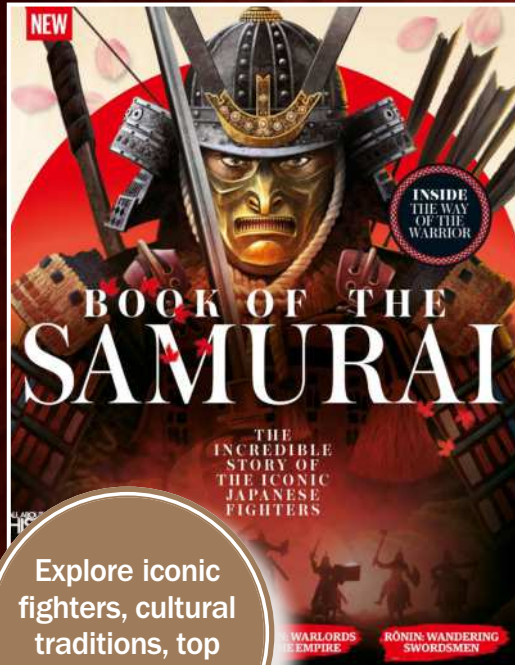
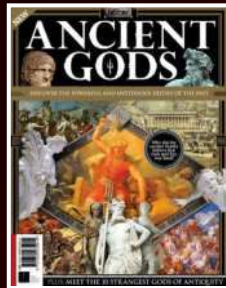
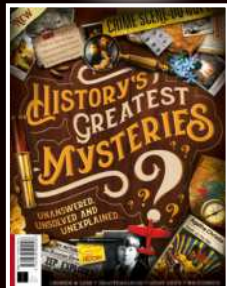
This would not be the last battle to decide the fate of the Middle East in the 1920s - the British would later face similar wars and rebellions in Aden and Iraq - but it set the scene for the kind of low-level conflicts that would rumble on through the early 1920s. As in Eastern Europe, World War I did not end in the Middle East on 11 November 1918. Instead, the ending of the Great War simply set the stage for future rounds of conflicts to determine the geo-political landscape of the rest of the 20th century.



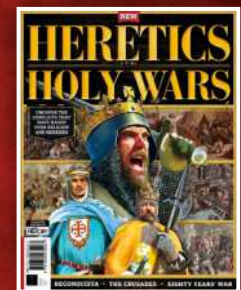
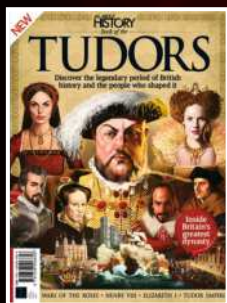
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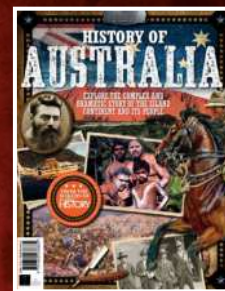
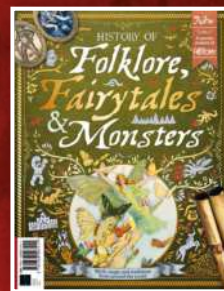
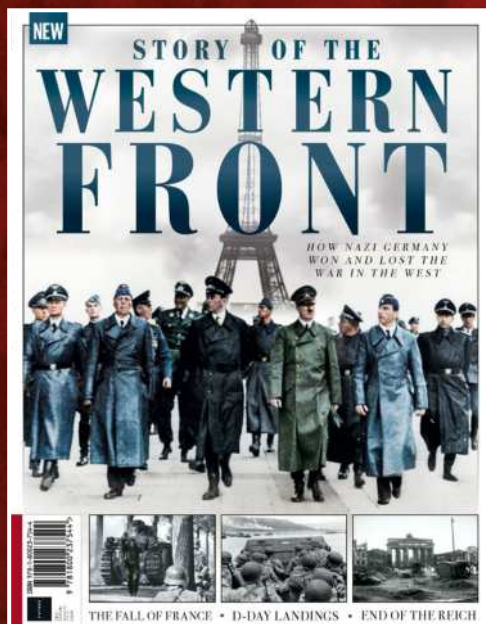
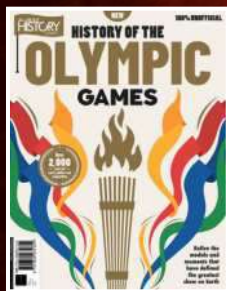
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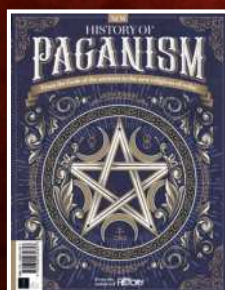
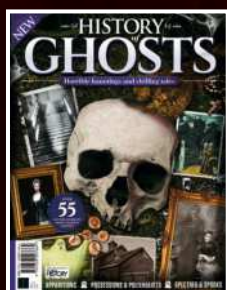


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